

FLORIN JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
MINORU NAMBA

May 10, 1992
August 31, 1997
September 1, 1997
January 11, 1998
December 29, 1998

Sacramento, California

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JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

FLORIN CHAPTER •

• SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95828

PREFACE

In the summer of 1987, a small group of people from the Florin JACL met at Mary and Al Tsukamoto's home to plan a new project for the organization. Because of the unique history of Florin, we felt that there were special stories that needed to be preserved. The town of Florin, California was once a thriving farming community with a large Japanese American population. The World War II internment of persons of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast devastated the town and it never recovered. Today there is no town of Florin; it has been merged into the larger county of Sacramento. Japanese Americans who reside throughout the United States, however, have their origins from Florin or have relatives and friends who have ties to this community. The town may no longer exist, but the community continues to survive in people's hearts and memories.

Many hours have been devoted to interviewing former Florin residents. The focus of the interviews was on the forced internment and life in relocation camps, but our questions touched on other issues. We asked about their immigration to the United States from Japan, pre-war experiences, resettlement after the war and personal philosophies. We also wanted to record the stories of the people left behind; they were friends and neighbors who watched in anguish as the trains transported the community away.

We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their seventies, eighties and nineties. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness.

We owe special thanks to James F. Carlson, former Assistant Dean of American River College and to Jacqueline S. Reinier, Director of the Oral History Program at California State University, Sacramento. Without their enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise, we never could have produced this collection of oral histories. We also want to acknowledge the project volunteers, the Florin JACL which contributed financial support, and Sumitomo Bank for their corporate donation.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

MINORU NAMBA

November 15, 1916--January 1, 1999

Minoru Namba's life as an American kibei was filled with emotion, heartache, and profound joy. The events of World War II and the dichotomy of his Japanese childhood and his responsibilities as an American born citizen and soldier in the United States Army Military Intelligence Service come to life in these oral interviews.

Because he was different--once by birthright and the other of ancestry--Minoru Namba's story is told with angst and humor. The psychological impact of feeling abandoned by his mother persisted even though he was raised by his maternal grandparents in the educated and cultured Watanabe household. From his gentle grandfather, a priest, and his beloved grandmother, he learned the traditional Buddhist and Shinto philosophies of compassion, duty, loyalty, and honor. Shattering this idyllic lifestyle was his feeling of being a burden to the family in the midst of an economic depression and political unrest.

As a young student in Japan, Minoru Namba learned the politics of the Japanese civilian government and the 1930s propaganda of Japanese military imperialism into Russia, China, and Manchuria. Ironically, in March 1941--approximately 7 years after his return to America--he was drafted into the United States Army. By the time Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Minoru Namba had served honorably in the U.S. Army for nine months. Within days, he was stripped of his rights and treated as a prisoner of war, jailed, and subjected to the insults of his fellow Americans. In March 1942, he was sent to Fort Bliss, Texas and screened for loyalty and personal history. He was accepted into the first class of the newly established Military Intelligence Language School at Camp Savage, Minnesota to refine his English and Japanese skills and to learn about counter-intelligence work. After graduation in November 1942 he was flown overseas to serve with General MacArthur's Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine combat divisions. Not only having to fight the enemy, Minoru Namba vividly recalls the discrimination, racism, and threat of bodily harm from his fellow American soldiers just because he physically looked like the enemy.

Meanwhile on the American homefront, the constitutional and civil rights of Americans of Japanese ancestry and their parents--legal immigrants--were being violated in the name of national security. President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, February 19, 1942, unlawfully removing 120,000 Japanese Americans from their homes and farms with only a few weeks notice to handle their personal business. Minoru Namba's parents and four younger siblings, his girlfriend and her family, were ordered from their homes in rural Sacramento, California, and taken by train--with shades drawn and guarded by military police--to the Pinedale Assembly Center for temporary housing. Then it was mass evacuation and incarceration into the remote, desolate desert WRA concentration camp--known as Poston Camp II--located on a

Native American Indian reservation near Poston, AZ.

Unscrupulous caretakers and real estate companies took advantage of the plight of the absent landowners. While in New Guinea fighting the war, Minoru Namba received a letter asking him to relinquish his partial ownership of the New Washington Oyster Company in Tillamook and South Bend, Oregon, because the building was burned and the business went bankrupt. He signed the document not having the resources to pay or fight it.

On another front, Minoru Namba's mother wrote to him in 1945 from Poston Camp II. She asked him to return home immediately and get their property back. Minoru Namba arrived in Sacramento, then met his Uncle Kumago Watanabe--now imprisoned in the WRA concentration camp in Minidoka, Idaho--to borrow \$1000 to get the farm back. Minoru Namba then flew to Minnesota to enlist the help of respected attorney and MIS instructor, Walter Tsukamoto. They met in Sacramento and won the fight to reclaim the family home.

Minoru Namba returned to Milwaukee and proposed marriage to his surprised hometown sweetheart, Kikuno Patricia Hashimoto. She accepted and they were married on April 30, 1945. Patricia--forbidden to return to California by Executive Order 9066--stayed in Milwaukee until the end of the war. Minoru returned to the South Pacific where his company became the United States Occupation Force, now assigned to Matsuyama, Japan. His tour of duty ended on December 31, 1945 after serving 4 years 9 months.

Minoru Namba's conversations and photos about his training in the U.S. Army boot camp, Military Intelligence Language School, and his assignments in the jungles and swamps of the South Pacific Theater under the command of General Douglas MacArthur provide eyewitness accounts to his service. He served with the troops in the battles and campaigns in New Guinea, South Phillipines, and Admiralty Island. With General Douglas MacArthur's troops, he island hopped around the South Pacific. He earned the World War II Victory Medal, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, 2 Bronze Stars, 2 Bronze Arrowheads, Good Conduct Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, American Defense Service Medal, and American Campaign Medal.

Minoru Namba's lifelong belief that "War is hell" was born out of his first hand observation of the inhumanity of war, the killing of innocents, the tragic conditions for soldiers conscripted or drafted into war, and the rebuilding of the communities devastated by bombs and economic deprivation during and after World War II.

Sworn to secrecy by his commanding officers accompanied with the threat of imprisonment by the F.B.I and plagued by nightmares that the F.B.I. was coming to take him away from his family, Minoru Namba refused to talk publicly about his MIS experience. Minoru Namba died on January 1, 1999 not knowing the President of the United States of America in April 2000 awarded his unit the prestigious *Military Intelligence Service Presidential Unit Citation*--the highest military honor--55 years after Japan and Germany surrendered to end WWII.

Minoru Namba's life experiences and oral history span eight decades, two cultures, two continents, and World War II. With supporting documents and photos from the Minoru and Patricia Namba Collection, this book explores the history of a Japanese American kibei--child, student, worker, citizen, soldier--in the United States of America and Japan, 1916-1999.

Ningen seishin no shori¹

¹ translated from Japanese as "Triumph of the human spirit."

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Minoru Namba¹

Interviewer

Eileen Namba Otsuji

Japanese American Citizens League

Florin Chapter President, 1993, Sacramento, California

California State University, Sacramento, Library

Japanese American Archival Collection Advisory Board,

Chairperson, 2000-2004

Interview Dates

Tape 1 May 10, 1992

Tape 2 August 31, 1997

Tape 3 September 1, 1997

Tape 4 January 11, 1998

Tape 5 January 11, 1998 [continued], December 29, 1998

Interview Location

Sacramento, California and South Lake Tahoe, California

Languages

Interviewee: Japanese and English

Interviewer: English

Transcription

Eileen Namba Otsuji and Mike Minoru Namba² transcribed the English portions of the tapes. Yutako Kimura, Reid Otsuji, Jennifer Namba and Joanne Iritani assisted with word processing from MacSE to PC and eMac. Bilingual editors Marion Kanemoto and Joanne Iritani translated Japanese words to English. Joanne Iritani completed the final version.

Editing

Marion Kanemoto, Patricia Namba, Joanne Iritani, and Eileen Namba Otsuji checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing and spelling. Proper names were verified. Insertions by the editors are bracketed.³ Japanese words were translated and transcribed into English.

Marion Kanemoto and Eileen Namba Otsuji selected the photos and documents from the *Minoru and Patricia Namba Collection* and others as referenced. Patricia Namba, Mike Namba, Marion

¹ a.k.a. "Nanba". Ref: California State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Standard Certificate of Birth, State Index No. W-351, Local Registered No.387

² children of interviewee

³ Interviewee died before completion of transcripts.

Kanemoto and Joanne Iritani reviewed the final manuscript, photos, captions, and footnotes for the editor.

Papers and photos

Documents and personal interview notes were provided by Patricia Namba and used by the interviewer and editor Eileen Namba Otsuji to compile the Military Service Timeline and Name Identification List. Original photos and documents were digitized to CD-rom by Reid Otsuji. Jasmine Mo used InDesign to complete the photo collection.

Tapes and Interview Records

Copies and bound transcript will be kept by the following:

1. Japanese American Citizens League, Florin Chapter, aka Florin JACL
2. University Special Collections and Archives at the Library, California State University, Sacramento, California, 95819

Transcribers

Eileen Namba Otsuji, Mike Minoru Namba, Utako Kimura, Joanne Iritani, Marion Kanemoto

Acknowledgement

All participants in this eleven year history project are deeply indebted to Ms. Marion Kanemoto, Oral History Project Committee Chairwoman, Florin JACL. The completion of this oral history is a tribute to her wise and determined leadership.

A project that started with pen, paper, and typewriters--and finished with rapidly changing, high tech computers--owes a debt of gratitude to the following individuals for their invaluable assistance: Patricia Namba, Utako Kimura, Howard Nakamura, Reid Otsuji, Mike Namba, Jennifer Namba, Joanne Iritani, Sam Kashiwagi, Patrick Otsuji, Monica Torres Otsuji, Georgiana White, Frank Iritani, Jennifer Champ, Michael Champ, Heidi Sakazaki, Florin JACL, Carlos Rodriguez, Sam Toll and Jasmine Mo for their assistance and expertise.

A very special thank you to Ronald Otsuji for his unwavering patience and to Yoshino and Masashi Watanabe of Okayama, Japan, for their hospitality and interest in the Minoru Namba story.

January 2004

MINORU NAMBA
SESSION I. SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Begin Tape 1, Side 1, May 10, 1992

OTSUJI: This is an interview with Minoru Namba, a kibei [a person born in the United States and educated in Japan] gentleman, aged seventy-five years old who lives in Sacramento, California. Today's date is May 10, 1992. The interview is being conducted at his daughter Eileen Otsuji's home at 6512 Benham Way, Sacramento, California. The interviewer is Eileen Otsuji of the Florin Japanese American Citizens League in conjunction with the Oral History Project of California State University, Sacramento. The address for the college is 6000 J Street, Sacramento, California. It is part of their Center for California Studies Oral History Program. This is Tape 1, Side 1.

Mr. Namba, we are collecting some information for the Oral History Project for the Center for California Studies. I need to get some biographical information about you. Can you give me your full name?

NAMBA: My name is Minoru Namba.

OTSUJI: And what is your address?

NAMBA: 4525 Euclid Avenue, Sacramento, California 95822.

OTSUJI: Can you give me your telephone number?

NAMBA: My telephone number is [916] 442-4270.

OTSUJI: I need to know where you were born, the date and the place?

NAMBA: I born in Manlove, California, on November 16...November 15, 1916.

OTSUJI: So, the correct date is November 15, 1916?

NAMBA: Yes.

OTSUJI: The next question Mr. Namba is regarding marriage. What date were you married and where were you married?

NAMBA: I got married April 30, 1945, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

OTSUJI: And can you tell me the name of your wife?

NAMBA: Patricia Kikuno.

OTSUJI: What was her maiden name?

NAMBA: Hashimoto.

OTSUJI: Thank you. What is her birthdate and where was she born?

NAMBA: Her birthdate is October 22, 1920, born at Sacramento, California.

OTSUJI: And now we are going to get into some of your parents' information. What is the name of your mother?

NAMBA: Hanae Namba.

OTSUJI: What was her maiden name?

NAMBA: Hanae Watanabe.

OTSUJI: And do you know what year she was born or when her birthdate was? Say, "I don't know" if you don't know, that's okay. We can get it. Do you know which city in Japan she was born?

NAMBA: Okayama-ken, or shall I say Okayama prefecture?

OTSUJI: Prefecture is fine.

NAMBA: Okayama prefecture, Kibigun, Mite.

OTSUJI: What was your father's name and where was he born?

NAMBA: My father's name is Namba, Senzo and he born at Okayama prefecture, Niwase-cho, Hanajiri.

OTSUJI: We can spell that. You can help us with the spelling, later. What was your father's occupation? Either in Japan, or here, or both?

NAMBA: Farmer.

OTSUJI: And your mother's occupation?

NAMBA: Housewife.

OTSUJI: Okay, Mr. Namba, thank you very much for some of your early biographical data, a little about yourself and about your parents. What we want to do now is go back to your early years and some of the things you can recall when you were growing up in Japan. What do you remember about your grandparents,

brothers, sisters, parents? Mr. Namba, you were born in Sacramento in Manlove, California. Can you be a little more specific? I'm not sure where Manlove, California is?

NAMBA: Better turn it off for now. Manlove is just [between Brighton and Perkins] between Perkins and Mills.

OTSUJI: Which right now would be southeast Sacramento county?

NAMBA: No. That's east of Sacramento.

OTSUJI: That's still in... it's currently Sacramento county?

NAMBA: Sacramento county, yes.

OTSUJI: Right. So, Manlove was considered a neighborhood much like Greenhaven, Pocket, or South Land Park, that type of a designation? You're nodding your head, is that a yes?

NAMBA: Yeah, Manlove is a station, little station, train depot.

OTSUJI: Oh, train depot and post office?

NAMBA: No, post office is Perkins.

OTSUJI: Well, describe the little area of Manlove, what kind of a business area did it have?

NAMBA: There was a little station, train stop. That's about it, there's no store, nothing. I remember. Perkins is a general store, and post office and service, gasoline station.

OTSUJI: Perkins was the area next to Manlove, the larger area. So, you are recalling back these memories when you were between the ages of something less than ten years old? Before you left for Japan? Or is that after you came back from Japan? [Laughter]. Seems like a long time ago, doesn't it? Well, can you remember anything that you did up to the age of ten? I know asking that question of you is rather difficult because I can't think of anything that I did in particular before the age of ten, although by then I would think that you would be in school. Did you attend American schools? Or maybe because

you were planning to go back to Japan they didn't enroll you in school?
Would that be a possibility?

NAMBA: I don't, chotto [just a moment], turn it off right there.

OTSUJI: No. That's okay. We'll just keep going.

NAMBA: I don't remember went to school, grammar school.

OTSUJI: Okay, let's do it this way.

NAMBA: See, so they [I] went to the army. . . sent it [me] back to Japan so they never sent it to grammar school.

OTSUJI: Okay. So, I thought from, you know, previous information, that you were seven years old when you went to Japan? How old were you when you went back?

NAMBA: I was ten, but could be seven.

OTSUJI: I always thought it was seven. When you came back, you were seventeen.

NAMBA: I know I didn't go to school, they didn't send me to school. I don't remember American school.

OTSUJI: So that seems to make sense.

NAMBA: Unless you ask Mitsue. You know my sister, Mitsue?

OTSUJI: Why would she remember?

NAMBA: Think she remember?

OTSUJI: She was younger than you. She was a baby. Oh, Auntie Kay might remember.

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: Why don't we do this. Can you tell me about your mother and father and about the approximate years they came to America? What year did Senzo Namba come to America? He came to work on the railroad, right? And then your mother came. How many years after that?

NAMBA: About four to five years later, I think. It's a, you know those days, picture marriage.

- OTSUJI: So they, the families, didn't know each other in Japan?
- NAMBA: No.
- OTSUJI: So, it was an arranged marriage, baishakunin [the go-between] took care of this. Who arranged this marriage for your mother and father? It's okay, I think you need to be candid. If there are things that you want to say that are embarrassing, we can keep this sealed for fifty years. [Joking]
- NAMBA: I heard from my grandmother that former prime minister Inukai, his youngest brother matching the marriage.
- OTSUJI: So, he was a professional matchmaker, that was his job, or he did it as a family favor?
- NAMBA: Just a family favor. Evidently, father's ojiisan [grandfather], he was working for that Inukai's family, minister, they had a big mansion and a big yard, all fenced in. I passed by there. He was...
- OTSUJI: Senzo Namba's father? Was working for...?
- NAMBA: Father, yeah, was working for all the handyman. Inukai family.
- OTSUJI: Okay, so, Mr. Inukai in Japan, was the baishakunin. So, how did they go about locating picture brides? What was the process? Mr. Namba is now scratching his head giving this a great deal of thought. [laughter].
- NAMBA: Komatta na. [This is very difficult.] [laughter]
- OTSUJI: Okay, so we'll go on. If we come to a part where you can't remember we'll come back to it or you can say, "I don't remember" and then we can go on. So, let's start by going back to being kibei. Do you recall getting on a boat to go back to Japan? Or is that something you blocked out of your mind?
- NAMBA: I blocked out of my mind.
- OTSUJI: Okay, so tell me, what's the first thing that you remember?
- NAMBA: First thing I remember is I went to my grandmother's place. It was Okayama-ken, Kibigun, Mite, and they introduce me to my grandfather and grandmother and my uncle and aunt.

- OTSUJI: Who went with you on this trip?
- NAMBA: My mother. Mother took three children, myself, my older sister, and, younger sister. Oh, I take it back. My mother took back myself, my older sister, and my younger sister, and her name is Mitsue, and next younger sister is Yoshino.
- OTSUJI: So what was your oldest sister's name?
- NAMBA: Kimiko.
- OTSUJI: So, Kimiko, Mitsue, , and you.
- NAMBA: Yeah.
- OTSUJI: And who's older, or Mitsue?
- NAMBA: Mitsue's older, Yoshino's the youngest.
- OTSUJI: About what were their ages?
- NAMBA: Yoshino was 1 year old, Mitsue was, if I remember correctly, was three or four years old.
- OTSUJI: Auntie Kay, Kimiko, is older than you?
- NAMBA: Yeah, she was one year older than me.
- OTSUJI: Okay, so there were four children and your mother? Do you remember anybody else on that trip? Were there any other Japanese families going on that boat at the same time?
- NAMBA: That I don't remember.
- OTSUJI: You don't remember the boat ride? Must have been a nice ride?
- NAMBA: Must be, huh? [laughter]
- OTSUJI: Seven years old, you just play anyway, so everything is fine. Everything is an adventure. Okay, so now you've arrived in Okayama, you've met your relatives. Do you remember how long your mother stayed?
- NAMBA: I think she stayed, maybe one month. I don't think she stayed more than one month.
- OTSUJI: And so, during that time, were you introduced to other relatives?
- NAMBA: Well, just other relatives, my Yoshiko-obasan [aunt].

- OTSUJI: What is her relationship?
- NAMBA: Yoshiko-obasan wasn't married. She was going jyogakko, a woman's school and ojisan [uncle], Sueo-ojisan, was just graduated from middle school and he got the job at city hall.
- OTSUJI: What did he do at city hall?
- NAMBA: He was a clerk, and ..
- OTSUJI: Yoshiko-obasan is close in age to you?
- NAMBA: Yeah, she was going to jyogakko.
- OTSUJI: Is that junior high school? High school?
- NAMBA: No, woman's college.
- OTSUJI: Oh, she was in college. Oh, she is quite a bit older than you? About ten years older?
- NAMBA: Ten years older, yeah.
- OTSUJI: And so, your mother, had one sister, Yoshiko, and she had how many brothers?
- NAMBA: Uh...Sueo-ojisan is the youngest brother, and Noboru was the second youngest but he passed away, and Kumago-ojisan was the oldest brother who was in America already.
- OTSUJI: Was your mother the oldest child or she was the youngest or she was in the middle?
- NAMBA: She was second oldest. Kumago-ojisan was the oldest, and then my mother Hanae was the second, and then Noboru-ojisan was the third and Sueo-ojisan is the fourth and Yoshiko-obasan was fifth.
- OTSUJI: And that was it? Okay, so Sueo ..no, which one worked at city hall?
- NAMBA: Sueo-ojisan, the youngest one.
- OTSUJI: Okay, what did the other brothers do? Noboru?
- NAMBA: Noboru, he passed away, but he was uh, he graduate Kyoto. It's Ryukoku Daigaku. Bonsan's school. [for priests]
- OTSUJI: That's a college?

- NAMBA: College, yeah.
- OTSUJI: He became a minister?
- NAMBA: Minister, yeah.
- OTSUJI: Oh, and then did he marry?
- NAMBA: Yeah, he was married and one son. But one son he die of walking pneumonia just before I went back to Japan.
- OTSUJI: Oh, so the child had passed away before you got there? So, they had no children? And then the other brother? Kumago?
- NAMBA: Then right after that Noboru-san also passed away with heart attack.
- OTSUJI: How old was he? Do you remember?
- NAMBA: He was young. I don't remember how old.
- OTSUJI: So was he the best educated one?
- NAMBA: Yeah, he's real educated, he a artist. Artist.
- OTSUJI: Oh, okay, we have some of the scrolls that he painted. Very, very well done. Did the other brothers have any particular talents? Sueo?
- NAMBA: Sueo-ojisan was, he went to flower arrangement school and he was after he working city hall and after work he was teaching the flower arrangement.
- OTSUJI: And Yoshiko, what did she learn?
- NAMBA: She went to, I remember, she went to the sewing school and then also flower arrangement school and also went to school for tea ceremony school. After she got married, she doing teacher for tea ceremony and also sewing school, I mean sewing teacher.
- OTSUJI: So, Sueo did not go to college?
- NAMBA: Sueo-ojisan, I don't remember. I think he went to college, just a middle school they call it chugakko...
- OTSUJI: High school?
- NAMBA: Yeah, high school graduate and then I think two year went to college, yeah.
- OTSUJI: Who did Yoshiko-obasan marry?
- NAMBA: Married to Naito, I forgot his first name. He was also a civil service

employee, government employee. Working Takamatsu. Takamatsu, Okayama prefecture like state office, prefecture office.

OTSUJI: Is it easier for you to speak in Japanese?

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: Well, you're welcome to speak in Japanese if you like. Okay, there are some questions that come to mind, I think you need to tell us more about your mother's brothers and sisters. These would be your aunt and uncles. So, if we could go back in order, can you tell me more about Noboru?

NAMBA: Noboru-ojisan.

OTSUJI: Sorry for my accent, I have to apologize.

NAMBA: He graduate Ryukoku Daigaku and become a reverend and also he study artist. He does that lot of drawing for what would you call that kakemono [hanging scroll] and Japan shoji no karakami [paper sliding door or screen]. All that picture and the scenery, he does that, too. While he was a preacher he did that.

OTSUJI: Can you tell me in Japanese, what his college education was like?

NAMBA: Who ojisan?

OTSUJI: Noboru. I got better pronouncing that, huh?

NAMBA: Well, ojisan was, I heard he finished grammar school or high school and then he went to Ryukoku Daigaku in Kyoto and graduate from there.

OTSUJI: Was that a very difficult school to get into?

NAMBA: I think it was hard, but he made it, he passed the entrance examination, so he went in.

OTSUJI: Was that a general university or was that a school for the ministry?

NAMBA: I think college for ministry. Then he became a minister, but he had own church, own butsudan [Buddhist altar]. He had a big, you saw it.

OTSUJI: I think you need to speak in Japanese. Could you do that?

NAMBA: Yeah, then she could translate in English.

OTSUJI: Yes, that way you can talk faster because I know you are capable of talking

much faster. So, he worked at a University in Kyoto which is well known as a center for education for Buddhist ministers. Okay, so when we went to visit Yoshino in Okayama, there is a temple behind the house and there is a cemetery next to the house. Is that where Noboru was the minister when you were growing up?

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: What's the name of the temple?

NAMBA: Shinpukuji.

OTSUJI: Do you remember what life around the temple was like? Can you describe that? In Japanese, please? Did you have to go in there and clean it? Did you have to go in and chant?

NAMBA: No, I was just kid so, you know a lot of older people went over there to clean up and all that, but I wasn't, I was just a kozoo, a little boy..

OTSUJI: Sounds like they treated you pretty nice?

NAMBA: Yeah, they treated me nice, but when I went back to Japan, they [other neighborhood children] about our age come around waiting for me to come out and play. But they not play, they want to try to beat me up and call me Amerika-jin [a person from America], you know?

OTSUJI: How did they know you were from America? You spoke only Japanese.

NAMBA: Japanese. But they, maybe a little different, or they people...

OTSUJI: All of a sudden you showed up and here was a child who was seven or ten years old. Where did he come from?

NAMBA: Little bit different and they talk about it, come back from America or something, so...

OTSUJI: In the village that you lived in, were there other children from America who were living there? Other kibei?

NAMBA: No, I was the only one.

OTSUJI: Well, that would make you rather different, wouldn't it? All right, let's go back to your other uncle, Sueo. You said that he worked in city hall. Can you

go back and tell me more about his education and his career as he got older?

NAMBA: Well, he was working in city hall, but he was going to night school. He was going after work. He was going flower arrangement school and also, what was it, he was flower arranger. I know, he was a teacher of tea ceremony. He went to tea ceremony school, so he was teaching for awhile. Then city... he got a working city hall, but as you put time in, he gets a promotion, you know, all the people there retire and he step up. So, he becomes mayor.

OTSUJI: So, mayor in Japan is elected by the people of the village or the city, like we do here, or is it a civil service appointment?

NAMBA: Could be a civil service appointment, I think.

OTSUJI: You don't think they're elected?

NAMBA: That, I don't know. I wasn't old enough to know civil service or elected from some council, I'm not sure about that.

OTSUJI: But in any case, it sounds like he accomplished a great deal. Not only was he active in government as a mayor, but he was also very accomplished as a tea ceremony teacher and ikebana. [flower arrangement]

NAMBA: Well, you know obaasan [grandmother] was a real pusher. She want kids to be a success so she was really pushing. And ojiisan [grandfather] was always out for, you know, people get sick, or something. He go over there and pray for them. [Grandfather was a priest.] I don't know, Japanese people are real funny, superstitious, so whatever, please say something, they'll believe it. Ojiisan, I would laugh, you know, [grandfather said], "toilet is in the wrong place and that brings the sickness in the family" or something, you know? [laughter]

OTSUJI: So what did he do? He asked them to move it? To relocate that toilet to a luckier spot?

NAMBA: He recommend to move it and then so, evidently a lot of people started coming.

OTSUJI: He got more popular because of [inaudible].

NAMBA: But, you know, [it is] funny Japanese people they believe that.

OTSUJI: So, what other kinds of things did he tell people that helped them? This is interesting. It's entertaining, but interesting. So your grandpa said what other things, what other kinds of advice did he give?

NAMBA: House usually they don't face north, he say is bad. East facing front door...

End Tape 1, Side 1

END SESSION I

SESSION II

BEACHCOMBER, SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CALIFORNIA

Begin Tape 1A, Side 1, August 31, 1997

OTSUJI: Today is August 31st [1997]. I am interviewing Minoru Namba, an American citizen and a kibei [a person born in the United States and educated in Japan] who was born in Perkins, California, on November 15, 1916. Mr. Namba is being interviewed today for the Florin JACL [Japanese American Citizens League] Oral History Project. This is a project that has been accomplished in conjunction with the Cal State University, Sacramento [CSUS] Library as part of the Japanese American Archival Collection [JAAC]. We are currently vacationing in South Lake Tahoe at El Dorado Beach in the Beachcomber Resort. Mr. Namba is here looking out the window and enjoying the beautiful view.

My name is Eileen Miyoko Otsuji. I am the eldest child of Minoru and Patricia Kikuno Namba. Hello, can you tell me where you are today?

NAMBA: Lake Tahoe.

OTSUJI: What are you doing here today?

NAMBA: Today, is my holiday. Day off and I am enjoying the Lake Tahoe. Beautiful blue sky and water is real clear and clean water.

OTSUJI: How many times have you come to Lake Tahoe?

NAMBA: About average twice a year.

OTSUJI: For about fifteen years?

NAMBA: Let's see. Yes, about fifteen years.

OTSUJI: Well actually, can you tell me what we used to do when we were young? I remember coming up here as children. What was it like then?

NAMBA: Yes, those days it was... we didn't have a place to stay and we enjoyed over here, sandy beach. And all the family packed gochiso [feast] and we ate. And we really enjoyed the scenery. I don't know how to express, but it's beautiful.

OTSUJI: Who did we come with in the old days?

NAMBA: Well, old days, my brother-in-law, Mas Hashimoto [brother of wife Patricia and husband of sister Mitsue] and his family and his father and mother. And, my family.

OTSUJI: Who is in your family? What are the names of your children?

NAMBA: My children?

OTSUJI: Your children.

NAMBA: My children. My oldest daughter is Eileen and next one is my son. His name is Richard Kazuo Namba. And next one is youngest son, Mike Minoru Namba. Of course, my wife is [Patricia] Kikuno. Maiden name is Hashimoto, but she married me, now she changed last name to Namba.

OTSUJI: When did you get married?

NAMBA: Let's see...I got married in, I think, I am not sure. I have to look up in my notebook. But, it is someplace in April. I flew back from Philippines. War was still going on. But, camp, my folks and brothers and sisters was still in [concentration] camp. And they released it and when they come home, but they got Oklahomans was occupied our home.

OTSUJI: Who occupied your home? People from Oklahoma?

NAMBA: Oklahoma people. They were real poor. They rented the place through the real estate company. And, I flew back. That place was a mess. Oklahoman, typical Oklahoma people. Place was so dirty, filthy, and I really surprised. That's how they live in Oklahoma, I guess. I came back. I have to tell him to move because my folks are coming back. My folks and my brothers and sisters coming back from Poston, Arizona, which is a concentration camp. And, I told him to "move out." They got a bunch of kids and I forgot his name, but his wife, they start crying. They want to stay. They don't want to move out. But, I asked, "I am sorry. My folks, they have children. They have no place to stay." I asked again to "Move out." And that was real hard for me to say to "move," but they finally moved. Then I have to

clean up the house. It was looked like, I don't want to talk bad about it, but it looked like a chicken house. It looked like full of... when I went in there, chickens flew out. And they got a pig! Pigs in there! And the pigs flew out. Inside the house, it was really dirty. Just like a chicken house [chuckles]. Finally moved out. I feel sorry for them. They, wife and kids, crying. They don't want to move out. And, I was in-between. My folks coming back and they had no place to go. And so I had to ask them to move. So, finally they moved. But, I really feel sorry for them. They moved out. Then I had to clean it. When I cleaned it, full of dirt. And, they stepped on it. Packed into the hardwood floor [chuckles]. Chicken and pigs flew out and I have to clean it. I kneel down and scraped with shovel. After that I used a brush to scrub floor and turn garden hose on, moved all that crap out. Then I left it open to dry out. Then I called my mother and father, "Everything ready, so, anytime you are coming home, just tell me. I give you my phone number. I will come after you. So, you give me the phone number." But, they came back into Stockton. No train Stockton to Sacramento, so I have to go down there and borrow the Italian people's...we know before the war and they were kind and said, "You could use my truck or passenger car or anything even tractor." You want the ranch to bring back to normal condition. You could use my tractor. They were real kind. And so, I helped them out.

OTSUJI: Do you remember what their names were?

NAMBA: Name is ... last name was Stefani.

OTSUJI: S-t-e-f-a-n-i?

NAMBA: Stefani. Yes, something like that.

OTSUJI: Were they neighbors?

NAMBA: They were neighbors. And his son...

OTSUJI: How did you meet them?

NAMBA: I know his son. And, his son, he got drafted about a year later. His name is Victor Stefani... lived on 14th Avenue. He was, really his father... he was a

young man. He was about four years younger than me. But, his father was...and his mother were real nice. They helped me.

OTSUJI: How did you meet the neighbors in those days? I mean the farms were twenty acres each or so ... more or less?

NAMBA: Before the war, he was a farmer, too. He raised grapes and just little bit strawberry. But most of it, grapes. It is a truck garden. He raising maybe all the vegetables, all kinds of different vegetables. Raising. Take it to the market. And so, that's how we meet. But, he is really kind. He is Italian descent so, he feel sorry for us. He was saying, "We have ancestor, they declare war to United States, but we don't have to evacuate to go into camp." And they were sorry for all the Japanese people. I was drafted before, seven months before Pearl Harbor. So, I know them. They send me off. I still remember clearly.

OTSUJI: What did they do? What was it like when you left...when you were drafted? How old were you?

NAMBA: At that time? Or, right now?

OTSUJI: No, when you were drafted?

NAMBA: Oh, drafted. Let's see. I have to think. I forgot lot of things. I have bad memory. And, I have to think. At that time I was about twenty four.

OTSUJI: What year was that?

NAMBA: That was nineteen....that year, you better wait until your mother come home because she remember the date because her brother and I drafted same date, when lot of people send me off from the Sacramento train depot. [March 26, 1941 - Southside Park, 8th and U Streets, Sacramento, California.]

OTSUJI: So you and Uncle Mas [Hashimoto] went at the same time? You and Uncle Mas left Sacramento at the same time?

NAMBA: Yes, oh and all the other friends. On that day, twenty-some nisei soldier drafted from Sacramento, and then lot of people send off by the "Banzai." You know how, in Japan, three times [yell], "banzai, banzai, banzai" [means]

good luck. It was a funny feeling. [smiles]

OTSUJI: After you went, where did you leave from... the train depot? Where were you going?

NAMBA: Well, they didn't tell us first. They say, "military destination." Any military move they don't publish it or they won't tell it to nobody. You know, sometime people might damage the...

OTSUJI: So you were probably around about twenty years old? Instead of eighteen or nineteen or twenty?

NAMBA: I was about twenty-four or twenty-five years old something like that. That...I have to ask your mother.

OTSUJI: We figure out the dates later if that is okay?

NAMBA: She knows Uncle Mas, I and Uncle Mas together, too. We went out from [inaudible] people. I was in Perkins.

OTSUJI: Before we get too far away, let's just go back. I know that you were married on April 30, 1945. Does that sound familiar? Do you agree with that? Good.

NAMBA: You better check with your Mommy on that...[laughing] because, I am not kidding. I am sure my memory is gone. I've forgotten lot of things and she get mad at me [laughing], but, I try my best to remember the past, but...

OTSUJI: So, go back and tell me a little bit about what happened after you were born. After you were born in Perkins, California, which is in Sacramento, County, in 1916. How long did you live there?

NAMBA: Well, I... let's see, this is another thing. I was about eight years old if I remember correctly. Eight or nine.

OTSUJI: Okay, so again we will get the dates clarified later. I know it has been a long, long time.

NAMBA: Maybe you will have to go to immigration office and find out. I don't know. Anyway, I went back to Japan and start my first grade in Japan.

OTSUJI: Did you speak English before you left Sacramento?

NAMBA: No.

- OTSUJI: Did not know any English?
- NAMBA: I did not know English because my folks strictly was Japanese at that time.
They were using broken English.
- OTSUJI: So you were the oldest. And then who were your next ...brothers and sisters?
- NAMBA: No, my older sister. You know, Kimiko nesan was my older sister. And, now with myself and Kimiko...
- OTSUJI: You are the second oldest.
- NAMBA: Yes, oldest son. And then, you know, Mitsue...three. Mitsue is married to Uncle Mas. Then Yoshino is [currently] in Japan. She was one year old or two years old. I forgot. In other words, my mother took us back four...
- OTSUJI: Your mother took four children back [to Japan]?
- NAMBA: Yes. My oldest sister Kay [Kimiko], myself, and Mitsue and Yoshino...four.
- OTSUJI: Did your father go, too?
- NAMBA: No.
- OTSUJI: Just the mother and four children.
- NAMBA: Just mother and four children went back.
- OTSUJI: Why did she go back? Was it a vacation or did she have a purpose for going back?
- NAMBA: She wanted to leave the kids with obaasan [grandmother] and uncle, my uncle Watanabe Sueo [last name, first name] and my Yoshiko-obasan [aunt].
Yoshiko was my mother's younger sister. So, they could live there. So, mother could come home [to America] and work full eight hour like a man is working, see? That was the whole idea. You want to work and make money. And they want to go back to Japan to live. But, every year, instead of those days, excuse. I don't know. I told my mother, I said, "How could you have four children took back [to Japan] and then after that you have four more coming up?" I said, "Why is that? You got a handful already. How come? How can you work?" Father is not hard worker. He wants to lazy side. So, he doesn't want to work. My mother is working and taking care of the kids.

And, it's miserable. So, when I come home from Japan to here, I cried, "Why?" And then, grandmother, obaasan and ojiisan [grandfather] give me pressure all the time. They say, "Your mother and father don't send me any money. I got to have all the expense, you know, to put your clothes, put to and buy the books and all that." "They don't send money." [getting tearful]

OTSUJI: Well, Let's go back. Let's just...so you are in Japan now.

NAMBA: Yes, in Japan

OTSUJI: What is your first memory of Japan?

NAMBA: Memory?

OTSUJI: I assume you went by boat. A ship?

NAMBA: Yes, ship.

OTSUJI: What was the name of the ship?

NAMBA: Name? I forgot. When I came from Japan...

OTSUJI: You can speak in Japanese. That's fine.

NAMBA: No. When I go home, it was a Japan ship.

OTSUJI: Was it a regular tourist ship?

NAMBA: Yes. Tour...

OTSUJI: I mean a commercial, you know, travel ship. Or, it was it some kind of other...

NAMBA: They were carrying commercial cargo and passenger.

OTSUJI: So the ride was okay? Accommodations were okay?

NAMBA: Yeah

OTSUJI: At that time, your family had some money? Enough to afford nice tickets?

NAMBA: That I don't know. My father was... I don't want to criticize him. He was an old retired Japanese Army soldier.¹

OTSUJI: Your father was?

NAMBA: Yeah. So he was telling me about Japan and Russian war.

¹ Minoru's father was Senzo Namba, born in Japan November 15, 1881. He was 35 years old when Minoru Namba was born in the United States. Senzo was 23 or 24 years old while serving in the Japanese Army during the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, emigrated to United States in 1906.

OTSUJI: What did he say?

NAMBA: He was on artillery. You know, those days, no mechanism. You had to carry the wheel, a big wheel. You carry big cannon, you know. When you start training you got to march, and then practice climbing mountains and all that. And, take almost wheel by itself, body, and then big cannon. So, cannon takes four people to carry and all that. I didn't see that, but that is what my father told me, you know.

OTSUJI: That's interesting. What other stories did he tell you? So, which, during which war was that?

NAMBA: Russian war.

OTSUJI: Russia and Japan

NAMBA: Russian and Japan. Yes, they call it Nihyakusan koo chi was a high mountain. And that belonged to... closest town was Soviet.... What the hell was it called? Is that Vladivostok? Is that Russia that port is in there?

OTSUJI: Vladivostok?

NAMBA: And in there was mountain named Nihyakusan koo chi. That one I think just a Japanese name, "Nihyakusan koo chi." Maybe the Russian, they have a different name for the mountain.

OTSUJI: So, your father was actually in Russia with the artillery.

NAMBA: Artillery, yes. He was bragging, real proud he was Japanese retired from the Japanese artillery unit. Discharged from... . Artillery people were all big, big people. You have to carry heavy wheels, and cannon, you know, so they select all the big guys.

OTSUJI: So, how big was he?

NAMBA: He was six feet. For Japanese, big. He was big.

OTSUJI: Six feet... almost six feet?

NAMBA: Yes, six feet. No, over six feet. He was 6 feet, 2 [inches] or something. He was tall man.

OTSUJI: My goodness.

- NAMBA: His brothers was all big! Except Nisaburo, was, Mary [Fujita] and Ruth's [Hiraga] father. He was oldest son of the Namba family. But he [Nisaburo], father, was...he don't want to go into army fighting Russia. So he sort of came to United States. He escaped, actually.
- OTSUJI: Does he have any brothers and sisters?
- NAMBA: What?
- OTSUJI: Does your father, Senzo Namba, have any brothers and sisters?
- NAMBA: Uncle... Namba... let's see, but my father was...
- OTSUJI: The oldest, or youngest? Where was he?
- NAMBA: He was [second] youngest from bottom. Sakujiro was youngest. My father's brother was youngest.
- OTSUJI: So your father was second from...being the youngest.
- NAMBA: Nisaburo was the oldest one, oldest brother.² Supposed to be family, oldest in family, supposed to carry on, you know, when in Japan for Namba family. But, he's poor family, he's poor family, so, in order to get rich why only way to get rich was immigrant and come in as immigrant and work here and send money to Japan. At that time, money was over 10 time...more than yen was pretty good, you know, the dollar here. So, if you make and send dollar, you could in Japan, they give you, say, send \$100 dollar...they in Japan, you could make ten...maybe...
- OTSUJI: Ten times that?
- NAMBA: Ten times that, see, in those days. So, he was sending all the money, I think, at that time. And then living condition much better. And they...
- OTSUJI: Living conditions were better here or better in Japan after he sent the money home?
- NAMBA: See, in Japan, they just competition, cut-throat each other, and they don't want

² Senzo's brothers and children's names:

1. Chuemon
2. Nisaburo - Tetsuo, Ruth, Mary
3. Senzo - Kimiko, Minoru, Mitsue, Yoshino, Haruo, Saburo, Yuriko, Shiro
4. Sakujiro

to. . . see. . . want to get ahead and make rich. So jealous, Japanese people. So they...

OTSUJI: These were all farmers?

NAMBA: Yes. They were all farmers.

OTSUJI: The family was all farmers?

NAMBA: The family was all farmers. Yes.

OTSUJI: What was the name of the place where they lived? Where did the Nambas live?

NAMBA: Hanajiri

OTSUJI: How do you spell that?

NAMBA: Okayama-ken, Okayama prefecture and...it was Niwase-cho, Okayama-ken, Niwase-cho, Hanajiri. Hanajiri is a village.

OTSUJI: Let me see if I have this right? So, Okayama-ken ...

NAMBA: Okayama-ken

OTSUJI: Ni wa se cho.

NAMBA: Hanajiri

OTSUJI: So ken is the big city.

NAMBA: No, ken, Okayama-ken is [prefecture like a state].

OTSUJI: Region? Like California?

NAMBA: Like California...something like California.

OTSUJI: Niwasecho would be Sacramento?

NAMBA: Equivalent to Sacramento, yes.

OTSUJI: And then Hanajiri...is?

NAMBA: Hanajiri is...

OTSUJI: Like Land Park [neighborhood]?

NAMBA: Something like that order, yes.

OTSUJI: Okay, one of the communities within the City of Sacramento. Okay, that's where the Nambas were from.

NAMBA: Okayama-ken is prefecture, you know Okayama prefecture.

- OTSUJI: Prefecture.
- NAMBA: And Hanajiri is, you know, Hanajiri. There was lot of small village names. But, other village I don't know...My grandfather, Namba-side's grandfather place is Hanajiri.
- OTSUJI: What was their name? What was Senzo Namba's mother? What was his parent's name?
- NAMBA: Parents...father no parents?
- OTSUJI: Yes, your father's father's name? Your ojiisan's name?
- NAMBA: Yes, last name is Namba, but first name I forgot. ³
- OTSUJI: How about the mother's name?
- NAMBA: Grandmother...which is my grandmother? Right?
- OTSUJI: On the Namba side.
- NAMBA: On the Namba side. I forgot.
- OTSUJI: So, you didn't know them very well.
- NAMBA: No. Because I lived on my mother's home, Watanabe. Watanabe's home. My mother's brothers and sister were all educated. They all went to the middle school called chugaku and graduated. And I don't want to say this, but Watanabe side always looked down on the Namba side. Namba side was poor and they don't have too much land and three brothers all lazy including my... that was well known. And I couldn't believe it... so if you work, you can save money. They were all too lazy, and they don't want it, and if they lazy, some of them gets into trouble. They had few acre, but they sold it to live on it. They sold all the land. So Namba family didn't have one piece. Didn't have it.
- OTSUJI: So, did they sell the land because there was hard times? I mean , famine? Was Japan having...because of the war?
- NAMBA: Well, at that time wasn't going war with China. That was Russia and Japan was fighting then.

³ Grandfather was Tokuzo Namba. Grandmother was Kono Kosaka , her maiden name.

- OTSUJI: That was what led up to World War I?
- NAMBA: Yeah, then World War I. At that time my father and father's brothers all went to Army. They got drafted, see?
- OTSUJI: So then you went back to Japan when you were approximately, probably seven or eight years old, or younger?
- NAMBA: About...I think eight... well eight until I finished...
- OTSUJI: If you were eight years old, you should have gone to American schools. Because kindergarten... didn't the kids start when they were five or six years old?
- NAMBA: Yes, but at that time no kindergarten...
- OTSUJI: Didn't matter?
- NAMBA: Didn't have any...mother and father didn't have time or something.
- OTSUJI: Possibly.
- NAMBA: Yeah, they were having...I have to give them credit. They don't speak English. See? Mother is nothing. Japanese only. Father, he goes to market and he say, you know he was just simple words, like "good" and "bad." You see he had vegetable garden. Vegetable he raised and he take it to the market. And talk about the market people, you find all kinds of grocery people there hakujin [Caucasian], lots of Chinese and he sell that produce over there.
- OTSUJI: So was he a very outgoing person?
- NAMBA: No.
- OTSUJI: Lots of conversation? Good sense of humor?
- NAMBA: Well, he likes to come visit. He does not want to work. He is lazy type. He was well known. Because I didn't know too much but, I went back to Japan, they told me. Namba Senzo, my father's name. They said, "Sen ya, Sen ya, mi ta, Sen ya, ochaku datta kara na!" They said he was lazy. [ochaku is goodnatured, not motivated.]
- OTSUJI: Of course, sometimes when they grow up they do better.
- NAMBA: Oh yes. He grow up. When he was small he don't want to work anyway.

Because he is not the oldest son so he didn't get nothing. Oldest son take over the family left over. You know. See? And Father had to start from scratch. Has to buy the rice bowl, has to buy the pan. The oldest son gets the rice bowl, pan, cooking pan and everything all left and take over. So anyway....

OTSUJI: You were probably eight years old when you went to Japan. And then your mother came back here, brought...

NAMBA: She left me over there in Japan. My sister, Kay. Kimi-chan. Auntie Kay [She was called all three names, Kimi-chan, Auntie Kay, Kimiko.] Kimiko, myself, and Mitsue, which is Mas's wife, and Yoshino. So, four people. Took me, took us back, and Yoshino, was, she don't know, but you know she was still drinking breast milk. But, Mitsue, already grown. I think she was about twelve years old, thirteen, something. So she don't want to stay. She was screaming so I said...

OTSUJI: Auntie Mitzie [Mitsue] had to be younger than eight.

NAMBA: Yes...and she doesn't want to be left behind. She wants to go back with mother. So mother said, "Ah, I have to take her back." Rest of kids were left. And then...Mitsue, don't want to stay...crying, screaming, so at last minute, made a decision and brought her back [to America]. So, that's why Mitsue was favorite daughter in my father and mother because they grew up kind of close to the mother and father, I think. Yeah.

OTSUJI: Well, she was especially fortunate in being able to come back.

NAMBA: Yeah... come back.

OTSUJI: So I think that makes sense.

NAMBA: She is lucky. Yeah. She start criticizing me...I say, "You are lucky!" "Look at me" I say. "I went over there. I do all the ojisan's work." He educated higher up. And he become the City... what was it? City...

OTSUJI: Mayor?

NAMBA: Mayor. Yes, and then he get good job, city's what was it? Not president... city manager?...or, what do you call that? City's...

- OTSUJI: County Executive...
- NAMBA: Yes, anyway... top, like Sacramento's that.... What is the name right now of the Mexican mayor.
- OTSUJI: Mayor Joe Serna?
- NAMBA: Yes, Joe Serna. Something like that...equivalent to that class.
- OTSUJI: Were they democratic? Were they elected? Or, were they appointed?
- NAMBA: He got appointed.
- OTSUJI: By whom?
- NAMBA: People, people was Okayama's people selected him.
- OTSUJI: That means they vote.
- NAMBA: Vote, yes.
- OTSUJI: They vote. Okay, so that's elected.
- NAMBA: So he was lucky.
- OTSUJI: Okay. Now I am confused. Who are these people? So you went to Japan and your mother Hanae Namba, I mean Hanae Watanabe, her maiden name, took the children back to her side of her family.
- NAMBA: Right.
- OTSUJI: And what was her mother and father's name?.
- NAMBA: Watanabe, right? Watanabe.
- OTSUJI: What was your grandfather's first name.
- NAMBA: Watanabe, Seikyo. Seikyo.
- OTSUJI: S-e-i-k-y-o
- NAMBA: Yes. And then my grandmother was Watanabe Fusa. Watanabe Fusa.
- OTSUJI: I remember that name in some of the pictures.
- OTSUJI: So, Watanabe Seikyo was...
- NAMBA: He was my ojiisan [grandfather], my mother's father. My grandfather.
- OTSUJI: Okay, what did he do? Seikyo. Ojiisan.
- NAMBA: Ojiisan was...He went to school for bonsan. [Buddhist priest, minister]
- OTSUJI: What's that?

- NAMBA: I think he went to Kyoto's... Kyoto is most religious people in there. Most religious school in Kyoto. I think Kyoto's bonsan equivalent to...?
- OTSUJI: A minister. Minister's school. Yeah.
- OTSUJI: Was that the Buddhist Church? The same one we follow in the Nishi Honganji?
- NAMBA: Right. Same. Yeah.
- OTSUJI: Okay, so then he was the local minister for the community that they lived in?
- NAMBA: You want the church's name?
- OTSUJI: Yes, as much detail as you can give me would make this much more interesting.
- NAMBA: Shinpukuji, or something like that. Ji is otera or church.
- OTSUJI: You could write this in Japanese? Right
- NAMBA: Yeah
- OTSUJI: Okay, somewhere in this transcript we will have this written in Japanese...Shinpukuji is the name of the church. How many families belong to this church?
- NAMBA: That I don't know. So many different religious...at that time I think around that time around forty, between forty-fifty.
- OTSUJI: When we went to visit Okayama, it was right next door to Yoshino's home. Was it the temple with the bell, and the yard with the big old ginko tree?
- NAMBA: Yes, they have a big church, and entrance they put a mon. Mon, entrance gate. After dark they close it and lock it so nobody come in.
- OTSUJI: So your ojiisan did the services there? Did your grandfather do the services at that church? At the Temple?
- NAMBA: Yeah. Temple, yeah.
- OTSUJI: I guess they don't call it church. They call it temple. In Japanese, what do they call it?
- NAMBA: They call it otera, you know. Otera is church.
- OTSUJI: Temple... temple.

- NAMBA: That translation, different translation. But, Japan has so many different religions so...
- OTSUJI: So were these forty-fifty families, do you think they were all related? Relatives? Or are...
- NAMBA: I mean same church? Oh, I think good forty families...
- OTSUJI: I mean, were they all related to the Watanabes?
- NAMBA: Well, yeah, Watanabes was a big...
- OTSUJI: Was that a clan?
- NAMBA: Clan. Yes.
- OTSUJI: What do you remember about the Watanabe clan?
- NAMBA: Well, my uncle, my mother's brother, older brother, was a bonsan. He was a graduate Kyoto's church, not church, but school.
- OTSUJI: So he took after the father? He did what the father did? Okay, and what was his name? What was the older brother's name?
- NAMBA: Older brother was... . Oldest one is Kumago, you know, Astoria's ojisan and obasan [uncle Kumago and aunt Isamu Hikasa Watanabe].⁴ Kumago-ojisan don't want to become a priest. Sueo-ojisan, the third and youngest brother, went to study other. Sueo-ojisan become mayor of the district. He was working in that county office.
- OTSUJI: Who was that? I am getting confused.
- NAMBA: That was Watanabe, Noboru. Noboru, he became bonsan. What do you call that? Bonsan.
- OTSUJI: Priest, minister. So he was the second oldest?
- NAMBA: Yeah. He was second. Watanabe Noboru is second oldest. Oldest son is Kumago.
- OTSUJI: And Kumago. And what did Kumago do? We know him because he came to California.
- NAMBA: He don't want to be preacher so he...he wants to.... He don't want to stay in

⁴ Astoria, Oregon, site of oyster farm owned by Minoru, Kumago, Isamu and two other issei partners.

Japan. "In Japan, you never get ahead," he said. Just rich people stay rich. Poor people stay poor. So he doesn't want to stay. He came to America... why he wants to make money. And then, he say, go back and buy the ranch and lot of mountains and stuff like that. He wants to.... He had big dream. He wants to lease it. Rent that place. So, he saved a lot of money. Then he... he had his own church, that Noboru. Watanabe Noboru, was next to the ojiisan [grandfather] and obaasan, [grandmother] was building, old type building. Ojisan [uncle], Noboru-ojiisan going to graduate Kyoto preacher's school. And then he came back. He made own house look like a church. Church's fancy brick [tile] roof. And then when you go inside just like the big temples, there is a big obutsudan [Buddhist altar]. You know obutsudan? He bought it from Kyoto and, you understand, brought it back. Buy and brought it back. He preaching every morning get up early every morning and pray, you know. And then, people, sometime family, everybody get sick, or some ask, "Why did we become sick like this?" You know how Japanese believe lot of thing, unnecessary thing. They believe in...you know...

OTSUJI: Like what?

NAMBA: For instance, toilet was facing wrong direction. Certain way, toilet. And, lot of things.

OTSUJI: Do you remember which direction was good?

NAMBA: Well [laughs] I forgot.

OTSUJI: Some of these old things might make sense to us now.

NAMBA: I know, but... all those things... they make sense.

OTSUJI: It is important you try to remember these things.

NAMBA: That's why they don't want to put toilet anyplace. He, studied. Noboru-ojiisan, he studied these kind of things. All the architecture people wants to know where is a good place for the toilet? And all that. Ojisan said you shouldn't face in the north. That I remember. Toilet should never face north. Bad luck. You know. Face south or west.

- OTSUJI: I will have to think about that one? I am sure we can come up with some good reasons why it shouldn't face north. [both laughing]
- NAMBA: No, no. That is old days' belief? I don't believe it. I don't care which way you face the toilet?
- OTSUJI: Well, maybe it has something to do with the sun.
- NAMBA: Well, that is a big question mark.
- OTSUJI: Well do you want to keep it cool? Or, do you want to keep it hot? Bacteria grows more when its hot. If you keep it cool, then maybe it doesn't smell so much.
- NAMBA: Yeah, yeah. [laughing] That I don't know. You must be... they study... know. He prayed about it and then the people say, so he ask for draw a map....

End Tape 1A, Side 1

Session II to be continued

SESSION II (continued)

BEACHCOMBER, SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CALIFORNIA

Begin Tape 1A, Side 2, August 31, 1997

OTSUJI: This is Eileen. This is a continuation of Tape 1A Side 1. It is still August 31, 1997. It is 1:37 p.m. And we are still in Lake Tahoe right at the edge of the water, on the deck, looking out the window at historic Cave Rock with all of its Indian stories and looking at the ships going by. We are going to continue with the interview of Mr. Minoru Namba. He was talking about his Uncle Noboru Watanabe in Japan. We were talking about houses and house design.

Would you like to continue? We were talking about which direction, and I am getting the feeling that as you describe this, that your uncle, probably, was doing some designing with consideration to... solar energy. And maybe... what is it? . . . almost one hundred years ago? We are now picking up those design principles by making and designing passive solar houses. Of which, my house is designed that way, too. Certain things face south and east and west although we didn't give any consideration to the toilet. Anyway, go on tell me about the rest of it...

NAMBA: [laughing]

OTSUJI: ... his architectural theories. Anyway, you said he had this big table with a ruler and what would he do?

NAMBA: Well, he... you know, he suggested, it's up to some people... still wants to house. But, he just tell "toilet should be" you know, "certain way." Certain direction. For he face it. Yes. But this is lot of thing...ah...let's see how shall I say that...

OTSUJI: Well, say it in Japanese.

NAMBA: Some degree you have to face toilet.

OTSUJI: What about the bed? Seems like I've heard stories about which direction the bed should...

- NAMBA: The bed, too.
- OTSUJI: The head of the bed...
- NAMBA: They call it north. North is bad. You have to head...as...you know, the east.
[pointing] East that way. So, when you're sleeping, your head is in a position
when you got up, the sun was coming. The sun would come up.
The sun would go down. They didn't like where the sun would go down.
They don't recommend it. He don't recommend it. Sun down.
- OTSUJI: Seems like if you have the head of the bed towards the east then you won't
wake up with the sun in your face. So, you won't be blinded by the sunlight.
- NAMBA: [exhales, sighs]
- OTSUJI: Does that sound practical?
- NAMBA: Very practical. Yes, I think so. So, I don't know why. That I can't give you
reason why.
- OTSUJI: Did it have something to do with bad luck?
- NAMBA: I remember sun. Always when sun come up.... This direction is east, right?
That way, see? So you put head, east is okay. But not sun go down, west, this
direction. See?
- OTSUJI: Well, seems to make sense you wake up with the sun. The sun comes up and
your body goes up... the sun goes down, the sun sets then you get to rest.
There must be some poetry to that...
- NAMBA: The sun goes down usually north, right? The sun go down in the West. East.
East sun comes up.
- OTSUJI: Rises in the east and sets in the west.
- NAMBA: Then sun goes down in the west. See?
- OTSUJI: Are there any Japanese sayings that go along with that? How do they say
that?
- NAMBA: Why I think that...today's modern people they don't think [of] wrong
direction or right direction. They won't say that. Space is limited in Japan.
Sometimes you can't face it. Road is here and another road run this way...so

- OTSUJI: Perpendicular?
- NAMBA: You know, sometime you want to build house facing east. But you can't east. Sometimes road is here so you have to face it this way. Right? See, I don't know why. I don't think young people, they don't go that kind no more, I think. Old days, you believe real strong.
- OTSUJI: Well, I think some of the trends now is to go back to some of these natural ways of thinking and natural herbs and natural medicines and calling everything alternative ways of thinking.
- NAMBA: Well, you know, when you get up...facing house east, that's a good feeling because you see when I get up early in the morning, sun's coming up, isn't that right?.
- OTSUJI: Well, that is true. If your head is to the east, then as you are looking and you are waking up then the sun would be coming through the window and it would be shining better, makes for a nice glow. Makes you feel good when you wake up. Something to be said for all these old things.
- NAMBA: So, sometime you can't find place like that. You know, some place already road is this side here, if it's already on the north, then sun would go down. See?
- OTSUJI: So those were the less expensive homes?
- NAMBA: People think that is bad luck or something but you can't.... You know if you could find sun come up on east side and sun would go down on west side. Fine, but you can't find sometime place like that all the time. So just the old day, old day's thinking, I think. younger day, younger generation I don't think they think about this kind of thing.
- OTSUJI: So, did the Watanabe's have...
- NAMBA: Watanabe's house was facing south. And east [inaudible] . . . was facing south.
- OTSUJI: Thank you for trying to show me and getting up and walking around. But you need to face towards the microphone. But, you can think different directions.

Okay, so their house faced south? The front door faced south.

NAMBA: The front door facing...

OTSUJI: My front door faces south now, too. That's because you wanted to get the energy source from the sun.

NAMBA: Well, our house is the same way. Our house is facing this way right?

OTSUJI: West

NAMBA: Sun going down. Backyard facing east.

OTSUJI: That's right.

NAMBA: So, I could see the sun coming up.

OTSUJI: Up and setting

NAMBA: Front, facing, see sun going down.

OTSUJI: That makes sense. So, how many...

NAMBA: That's old day, people have idea, see?

OTSUJI: Probably made some sense. All right, so now I am trying to picture what your home looked like when you were growing up. What did your home in Japan look like when you were growing up?

NAMBA: Home?

OTSUJI: So you were a little boy when you got there. Right?

NAMBA: Right.

OTSUJI: And you had ojiisan, grandfather? And then, was Kumago there when you got there?

NAMBA: Kumago?

OTSUJI: Ojisan [uncle] was he there when you got there?

NAMBA: No, he already came to...

OTSUJI: United States?

NAMBA: Oregon already.

OTSUJI: So did you meet him in the United States before you went to Japan? Did you already meet him?

NAMBA: No.

- OTSUJI: So, you didn't meet him until later.
- NAMBA: Yeah. After I finished school and came back. That was 19...
- OTSUJI: So Noboru was in Japan.
- NAMBA: Yes, Noboru-ojisan was there.
- OTSUJI: Was he closer to you in age? Was he a young...
- NAMBA: I tell you it's a long story. He passed away. When I went to Japan. I think about six months or maybe eight months ago, he passed away. My obaasan [grandmother] told me that.
- OTSUJI: He died six months after you got to Japan? Oh, so you didn't know him very long either.
- NAMBA: Yes, I don't know him. I saw the pictures only. You know?
- OTSUJI: So, who did all the paintings that we have...all the wall hangings?
- NAMBA: Well, he...all that he, that was, he went to the Kyoto bonsan's school. And graduate. And part-time he was artist. He practiced.
- OTSUJI: Beautiful, beautiful work
- NAMBA: Yeah. Artist practiced. And then he figure, well I'm going to become a priest. Bonsan, you know. And then as Bonsan pray for the good health, good fortune, good place. That only income is limited, he say. That is what obaasan told me that, you know, my grandmother. See?
- OTSUJI: Still the same today.
- NAMBA: Yes, so, he had to have something else on the side. So, he became artist. In Japan, I don't know whether you see it or not, they call it shoji, and karakami [paper sliding door or screen]. They call it, you know, each room close door when go to sleep, or certain company came. Don't want to show inside, close door. In order to do that, he was... studied that for help the people to pray, and get good health and good fortune. He pray for that... and top of that. And, today's building, I don't think they putting... bonsan doesn't have those things to chant. Bonsan dresses differently. Right? Nowadays I don't see the building. Japan has Americanized. American building you don't see

lot of pictures and lot of old day door and tokonoma [alcove]. Plain glass or either something but...

OTSUJI: So, you are saying that the way they did it in Japan was they would have a temple or home and it had very little furnishings and then they would have a room or a wall that was just for quiet, for meditating and then they would put the paintings up.

NAMBA: Painting on...and...

OTSUJI: Is that where they would entertain people, not so much entertain but...

NAMBA: That's old days lot of people go for that. And then my uncle, Noboru-ojisan was artist. See? So, well, door, right there, big door like that, and he measure it and put the drawings on the door. So he would measure...and he draw like over here you got big barn or barn and water tank along side and all that. So, he painted so it fit.

OTSUJI: That means that the sliding doors had paintings on it?

NAMBA: Yeah. Sliding door had painting on it.

OTSUJI: Pretty

NAMBA: See? But, new building all copy America. They don't put it. I noticed it. I went to Tokyo and Kyoto, the hotels. I don't see too many that kind of building.

OTSUJI: Did Yoshino [sister who remained in Japan] have that in her home?

NAMBA: Yoshino? Yeah.

OTSUJI: She has that house that is over 150 years old.

NAMBA: Yeah, actually his [her] uncle...Noboru-ojisan, uncle for Yoshino.

OTSUJI: So, the home that we visited...that is Yoshino's home is Noboru's home?

NAMBA: Yeah, Noboru's home.

OTSUJI: Was he married? Was Noboru married?

NAMBA: Oh yeah. Noboru married and his first son was genius...Obaasan [grandmother] was telling me. He got sick and passed away. And then ojisan was he don't believe in doctor. He used to pray those days. He going to fix.

You can't... psychologically you have to different. People now, when they sick you have to give the right medicine. Old days he don't... preaching. He wants...

OTSUJI: Did they have doctors in those days?

NAMBA: What?

OTSUJI: Did they have doctors in those days ...in Japan?

NAMBA: Not...yeah, there is doctor, but not like, try to...old days believing try to get well. See?

OTSUJI: Noboru passed away and he was very young.

NAMBA: Very young, yeah.

OTSUJI: And he had a son and the son passed away.

NAMBA: His son, he should have go to doctor and get a medicine. He would have saved him, young son.

OTSUJI: He was very talented. So, who was there besides Kumago and Noboru. Who was the next child?

NAMBA: Noboru. Kumago was oldest one, Noboru was the next one. And Sueo-ojisan. He was like a city... he was equivalent to a mayor.

OTSUJI: So Sueo-ojisan became a mayor.

NAMBA: Mayor, yeah.

OTSUJI: And, what did he do? He also did some art work, too, didn't he?

NAMBA: Hard work?

OTSUJI: Art. Sueo. Didn't he do the trays with the woodcarvings?

NAMBA: Oh, yeah.

OTSUJI: Or did he do the paintings on the wall? The scrolls?

NAMBA: Sueo-ojisan was just like Kumago-ojisan. He, Kumago-ojisan didn't do too much art. Artist.

OTSUJI: But was he artistic?

NAMBA: Why he was artistic, but he's not... he didn't go to school for artist. Only ojisan, is Noboru-ojisan went. My Kay--Kimi-chan--was adopted because

Noboru-ojisan lost the son. See?

OTSUJI: Auntie Kay went to live with Noboru.

NAMBA: Yeah. Obasan was a widow, you know, and she didn't get married. See?

OTSUJI: And what was obasan's name?

NAMBA: Ah, Shinya no obasan, what was her name?

OTSUJI: What did you call her? Shinya...what's that?

NAMBA: Next time I see Santa Rosa [California] and see my Kay. Kay was staying with them. After they lost their son, and she doesn't want to adopt any other people unless they know the relative or something. So Kimi-chan actually not officially adopted, just stayed there. And Kimi-chan, when she finished school, she wants to come back to the United States. Just like me. I told them, I say, "I don't want to stay Japan." I told my Obaasan many times. Obaasan, grandfather and grandmother. I don't want to stay. See? Over there, real competitive jobs. Lot of people but jobs limited. So...

OTSUJI: What kind of work was available? What kind of jobs could a person get?

NAMBA: Well...see there is no big factories that time. Big fat farmer...

OTSUJI: Everybody was farming?

NAMBA: And my cousin, my father's brother's son. Of course, his father was kind of...idea for machine, repair machine, make tatami, [floor mat] you know, the tatami? Rice straw was used.... Using rice straw, you put different color drawing and design. I don't know what to call it in nihongo [Japanese]. Anyway, that material you have to grow, like the rice hull of the rice plant. After take the rice over, they dry it, and then they put it in the tank for color. Different colors. So, when you make tatami, you got all the colors.

So anyway, that Noboru-ojisan was architecture like the ones inside our house he drew them, that's some of Ojisan's drawings. See? So, anyway, he did that. He was making side money besides he was a preacher actually in Japan. When lots of kids in family got sick, and in real poor health you know,

or became crippled, ojisān went over there, just prayed, and took a small taiko drum, and tapped it [tap tap tap]. I don't know, it makes you listen in quietly. Even if I'm not sick, I feel better when I come out . [laughing]

[Portion deleted during editing]

OTSUJI: That is called faith.

NAMBA: Yeah. So, [laughing]... anyway, I didn't believe too much...

OTSUJI: The power of positive thinking.

[Portion deleted during editing]

OTSUJI: Well, that's about right. 30% of the time any...even a sugar pill will work and take care of the problem.

NAMBA: Yeah, so I won't against 100% believing. Believe all up to certain extent. Too much then, you...sickness...kick it out.

OTSUJI: Well, how did he deal with the families and people dying or children who were delinquent? Did he get involved in those family issues?

NAMBA: Well, yeah. I remember, Noboru-ojisān and my grandfather [ojisān], which is my mother's brother, parents, yeah. See, well I remember he say, they, "people get well." And...they in Japan, they orei [give a gift of gratitude], you know, they buy something or they think they need more rice...why they...hailed it themself. Some of them used cows to pull that two wheels...

OTSUJI: That's how they paid? That's how they showed their appreciation for these...

NAMBA: For their appreciation, yeah. See. Not like those days. I remember, people said they became well and asked how they should show their appreciation. People come down asking for Ojisān and Obaasan, you know. So, I remember. See that's... it is up to individual. You think you are thankful when things are all healed then Ojisān and Obaasan were very happy. But if it became bad, you know, just figure out why it didn't get better. Why what had been done was not good, so, they had to drink some different thing. You know sometime it was funny... so, I horse laugh. Then Obaasan scolded and said, "Don't say those naughty things." [laughing] Lot of... I believe

sickness... that's own thinking, you know. Lot of people, oh, well, I am old. That's end of it. So I am close to the... get my... so medical... I won't live too long and all that crap... Ojiisan and Obaasan, people telling me, he said, "No, I am going to get well. By all means, I am going to get well." And then by watching what you eat. And you... not eating what the doctor already said was not good for you, and you eat what you should, you will have energy and recover. That, I believe that.

[Portion deleted during editing]

OTSUJI: What other things do you remember? What was the umeboshi [pickled plum] story?

NAMBA: Ah, well, I learned lots from Obaasan. What Obaasan said, I believe. I figure, that's . . . you know. They left me, I was eight years old. I kind of resent for a long time. When I returned to the United States I was 16 years old. I told plenty. And she [mother] start crying. And then she say, "You didn't learn. You didn't listen." And this and that. "Whose fault is that?" I tell mother. "You don't have to send me over there for somebody else. Ojisan had his own child." And then, I am actually... they don't want me to stay because they have a...uncle and obasan [aunt], had their own children. See? Then I stay over there and then I went through mentally. I got lot of pressure after I arrived. I still remember, I did. I am mad at my father and mother. Own kid, so I tell that to lot of younger people. Yeah, I told them already lot of them. Own kid, you raise own. Regardless, raise your own. Never ask for somebody else to raise your own kid. I don't believe in that. It is your fate.. You don't know. Mentally. I mean, I am, really make me crazy. Obaasan was...she had three children. So, my mother, my father not there. So, Obaasan felt sorry for me she said, so they give me something, candy or some other good things to eat, gave me more than my share. Ojiisan's own kids, three kids, they gave a smaller portion you know. See, and then Obasan [aunt] was watching and hearing what they say. So, acutally, Obaasan is...she nice

to me, but, one time I told Obaasan, I remember, I said, "Obaasan, I am an outside child. [A child from somewhere else.] When I get older, I will return to America." Even if I say I won't return, my parents will make me return to work. They want me to work and make money. He got lot of kids... eight kids! Who is going to pay? Old man want me to work and make money. He got lot of kids. Eight kids! Who is going to pay?"

The old man works to take care of the children, they needed schooling. That's what he said. Ah, ha! [gestures, makes swish sound, laughs]. I feel like kicking him in the ass, you know. [laughing] Turn him around back. He, old man, was lazy! Believe me. And then he say, "Oi! Minoru! Do this! Do that! When you finish, then do that." He give me assignment. I said, "Look, I returned to America. I have to study my English. If I am not adequate in English I am handicapped." So, I said, "I want to study a little bit." He said, "After you finish, you'll have time. God damna you!" 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock, I worked until I was mentally exhausted. I was sleeping, you know.

OTSUJI: So you were studying English in Japan?

NAMBA: No!

OTSUJI: Oh. Nobody was teaching English?

NAMBA: Nobody. Those days, your government was propaganda. That time, why, I felt it ...Japan wants to beat America. Strike America back. See. Japan wrong. So, military was strong.

[Portion deleted during editing]

You know, America everything rich and they have everything. Japan don't. Poor country. They don't have raw material. They all have to buy or exchange from foreign country. So, I feel sorry for them. I mean... you know. But... those kind of things, don't tell anyone. It is history, but this kind of thing some people will make fun of you if you talk about it in the United States. "Your grandparents... Your Ojiisan, Obaasan must have had a difficult time with you." "No, they didn't have a difficult time. It was

natural." You know. See. Obaasan, too, . . . because my parents weren't there, you know. I prefer living in America when I came back and worked. No matter how much I ran through the house, no matter how I did things, I didn't fight with Ojiisan, Obaasan. We worked well together.

[Portion deleted during editing]

OTSUJI: So Yoshino [Minoru's sister who had remained in Japan] said that after World War II they had to parcel out a lot of their property because of [General] MacArthur's order. Did I understand that right?

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: I mean, they must have had lots of property?

NAMBA: Lot of property.

OTSUJI: And then they were not able to hang on to it?

NAMBA: Poor people don't have property, farmland. And they can't raise it. And they can't pay tax on it. So rich people from then on, you know... temporary, until after the war, let them use it. That is the Order came from government in Japan. See? So, Yoshino was actually adopted, so she has right to say something, too, you know. That ranch, that's her Ojiisan and Obaasan want Yoshino to keep it in her name.

OTSUJI: So, she was actually the only child left. Because nobody else had children.

NAMBA: Nobody had children, yeah

OTSUJI: ...nobody else had surviving children.

NAMBA: Yeah, but Yoshiko-obasan. I don't know whether you meet her or not.

OTSUJI: I met her twice.

NAMBA: You did? She was going to jyogakko you know, the jyogakko, women's high school or university in Okayama. And so, at that time, you see around 55% was sewing. All the girls' school university. In those old days very few people, rich people, sent their kids to university. See? Poor people couldn't afford it. So, anyway, Yoshiko-obasan pretty well educated, so after finishing, she marry to. . . rich, ah . . . he was working in Okayama-ken, equivalent to

state capitol. So, he gets good pay. And then her husband passed away. Her husband was in Manchuria, he got sick. So, Yoshiko obasan, didn't go because she scared of Chinese, you know? So, anyway he is mad. He told me, "When I am going to Manshu [Japanese pronunciation of Manchuria.] "You want to come with me?" I told him, "No, no, thank you. I got to study Japanese yet, otherwise I can't go no place. I can't even get a good job over here. So, at least I want to learn Japanese." And then, China... Then, they call it Manchurian Incident. No, it wasn't incident. It was war, but they using different type of words. All Japanese who wants to go into Manchuria, he wants to conquer Manchuria. See? And then expand. Japan got so many people, over-populated, you got no place to go. Young people in Manchuria received good pay. He went to Manchuria and got sick and he passed away. Then Yoshiko-obasan went after and got body and bring back and make funeral. Yoshiko-obasan stay under the weather for a long time. But, Obaasan sent her to sewing school in Okayama. They call it jyogakko. Equivalent to women's university. She graduate and certificate for graduation and also teaching to younger girls. She was doing all that. She was a widow. Then Yoshino [Minoru's youngest sister] went over there. Yoshiko-obasan didn't have any children. So, she invite Yoshino. You know. So, wrote a letter long time ago. I am single. I am thanking for Yoshino. She was loved and cared for. I felt relieved. She was alone and that was a pity. I want to grow up together, you know. See? So, Yoshino was loved by them, so I wrote letter for thank her. They were very good to her. I real happy to hear that she was loved. [Yoshiko] obasan wrote, don't mention it, she say. I don't have children. I had children. One children. I had a girl but she passed away. She was sick. I told her, Obasan, make at least one more boy or girl. One pretty one died. Modern medicine, modern doctor under their care, so you could save the patient. Oh? It's sometime too late. You can't get it. If you could get it right away. But, sometime you can't get it too late, no good. Well, that's

faith... I feel sorry for her, too. She was the one who helped me with lot of schooling. I was going and...

OTSUJI: Who? Yoshiko-obasan?

NAMBA: Yoshiko-obasan, yeah. I am thanking her for... That's like my older sister, too. Take care of me like that. You know... and then teach me lot of things in school. So, I got to go see her one of these days before Yoshiko-obasan, she's so old. And almost 100 years old.

OTSUJI: She's almost a hundred? Your mother was ninety-nine years old, almost one-hundred, when she passed away.

NAMBA: My mother was, what, ninety-nine?

OTSUJI: Ninety-nine, almost one-hundred.

NAMBA: So, Obasan, I think she is healthy.

OTSUJI: Must be. Your mother never spent a day in the hospital. Not one day. So, Yoshiko-obasan stayed a widow? She never remarried?

NAMBA: Yeah. Yoshiko-obasan widow. She never did remarry. She afraid... No, I told them, when was it? I think five, six or seven years ago I went to Japan? I went to see Yoshiko-obasan, and said, "Obasan, isn't it lonely being by yourself? Why don't you marry?" She said, "Marrying would be bothersome. I've lived alone a long time and it's better this way." Obaasan [Yoshiko's mother] sent her to school for flower arranging, and went to go jyogakko in Okayama. Obaasan sent money. She received the money and then became a sewing teacher. Girls' school sewing teacher.

OTSUJI: And flower arranging.

NAMBA: Flower arranging, too.

OTSUJI: And tea... ocha?

NAMBA: Tea ceremony, also. See that's it. I tell you she got an education.

OTSUJI: When I went to Japan, Yoshino and Masashi [Yoshino's husband] took me over to her place, so we went through the ochanoyu [formal tea] ceremony. Very pretty.

NAMBA: They're really educated. Then Yoshiko-obasan she was only one. . . I got so damm mad at my mother. Obaasan and Ojiisan said, "Your parents don't send money. Don't send money," they said. I don't know. When I came over here, my father and mother said we sent money. Mad at her, mad at me. Money expense, school expense money. I wrote a letter from Japan to my mother and father..My uncle and Obasan give me pressure, because they, I think, paying for my going to school, buying clothing. You know, buy books, tablets...

OTSUJI: What are you saying? Your mother and father sent money?

NAMBA: They didn't send money. After I returned to America, I asked my parents, "How come you didn't send?" Obaasan and Ojiisan give me lot of pressure that they didn't send money. Old man [my father], told me. . . he don't write too much Japanese. He asked a man in Japan Town who was educated, a man from Japan who helped lot of Japanese people by writing a Japanese letter. He had a government official permit, I remember that. He wrote that your parents are sending one hundred dollars, two hundred dollars. This is being sent through me, he says. He understood English.. He was going to the post office, or some kind of registered mail. Use to send it. Not often but every once in a while. I send it, he say. He said he was sending money. He said. [laughter]

OTSUJI: So, he said that he was sending money?

NAMBA: Yeah, sending money, yeah.

OTSUJI: Sometimes?

NAMBA: Sending money, yeah.

OTSUJI: He was?

NAMBA: In Japan, Obaasan said it didn't come. I don't know who to believe. He was a well educated man. He said to go to school, go to school. He pushed me, so I don't lose out to the hakujin [Caucasians]. If you are going, you have to graduate from school. So, I pushed myself. I remember that.

OTSUJI: Your father and mother said they sent money?

NAMBA: They said they sent money. Obaasan don't tell me lie, I think. I don't think so. Grandmother was real nice to me, because inside the house, there was no other man. Ojiisan working in the morning to night. Then he socialize. They have to go parties and this and that. Don't come back until 9 or 10 o'clock. And do the work, farming activities, Obaasan and me do the work, only. I said to Obaasan, "I got examination tomorrow. Because I have an examination, I have to memorize all this." "Ah, is that so? Then the work will get delayed." There was no other man around. Just me. Ojiisan, my grandfather wasn't around. He was out praying for people who were sick in their house.

End Tape 1A, Side 2

SESSION II to be continued

SESSION II (continued)

BEACHCOMBER, SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CALIFORNIA

Begin Tape 2, Side 1, August 31, 1997

OTSUJI: This is Eileen Otsuji. I am with Mr. Minoru Namba. We are continuing our oral history project for the Florin JACL [Japanese American Citizens League]. This is Tape 2, Side A. It is still August 31, 1997. It is now 2:30 p.m.

Now, Mr. Namba, where were we? We were talking about Japan, your family in Japan, and some of the money issues and issues of financial support for families who were divided during this time. You were telling me that your parents sent money to Japan and your grandparents who were responsible for raising you said that they didn't get any. Do you want to continue telling me more about that?

NAMBA: This is embarrassing to have others hear about it.

OTSUJI: Well, it's history.

NAMBA: It's history, but some way it's... cut that part, I think you know. If it's sympathy, it may be okay, but it's probably all... people thinks... you know. If they look at it in a good way, but may take it in a bad way. Some people might think he must be exaggerating or something, you know? People don't believe what I say, what I actually went through from experience. So, I think you know...

OTSUJI: Well, I think this is the opportunity to be able to talk about the hardships that happened because of that time in history.

NAMBA: But, you know kibei. [Born in America and educated and raised in Japan.] I talked to them. They ask, "You went to Japan . . . do you feel you were used?" Well, I guess I was used. But, this is real family embarrassing, so, I don't want to go and tell the detail. Ordinary family they have enough money, or actually old man [father] said he sent the money. He went through the businessman. And then old man said he sent it, after I returned to the United

States. Anyway, old man said to write a letter that the money was sent. So, I wrote it, and Obaasan wrote back, addressed to me. "No." "Last month my father said he sent the money. Did you receive it?" "No, I did not get the money." So, I told my mother and father. I didn't say much to my father. He gets so mad. You know, he get embarrassed. He was mad at me. So, I tell mother, and mother says she'll tell him when he's in a good mood that the money did not get there. He may think truly that he sent it. [The businessman] was so shrewd. And old man is on the dummy side, see? I think... that's my estimation. He took... told old man that it was sent. We looked into it. And the businessman got mad at me. "Who said that kind of thing? Don't let one word of this get out to the public." He said, "don't put this out to the public". "But, if it's the truth, then it's all right to say the truth, isn't it?" "No. If you say the money has disappeared, then I will be blamed. Don't write that." Boy, I tell you. Isn't that strange? He got mad at me. Isn't that strange? He must have taken the money and told the old man that he sent the money.

OTSUJI: So, in those days, did anybody use receipts?

NAMBA: No way, no way.

OTSUJI: No, but when business transactions were conducted, did people give receipts to each other or was everything done based on handshakes? "I trust you, you trust me, so I don't have to give you a signed piece of paper.

NAMBA: That's it. Old man, he's not dummy, but he didn't go to school, so he's not too bright, see? I asked if the money was sent. Where was it sent from? He say, "U.S. mail." I looked into it. I asked for details. The old man, he's baka shojiki [foolishly honest], you know. He's not too bright. He's a big shot, see? Everything like that. He don't want to squabble anything. He doesn't want to do that, see, that type, that kind, the old man.

OTSUJI: So, how many times did you ask?

NAMBA: I asked many times. [My father] called me a dummy. You can't accuse the

businessman. The people in Japan were accused of dishonesty. But, Obaasan don't tell me lies, I know. She was an honest, woman, that old lady.

OTSUJI: Well, considering they were ministers...

NAMBA: Yeah, see...so old man put me in lot of ... that was ... I just don't like it. I suspected the businessman because when I finished grammar school, and I wanted to go to high school, because I didn't have money, no money. So, I wrote a letter to that man to get a job, so go to work.

OTSUJI: That was high school in Japan?

NAMBA: No, America.

OTSUJI: So, you came here. Okay, so tell me when you came back here when you were sixteen?

NAMBA: I was came back when I was eighteen years old.

OTSUJI: Eighteen years old. So you graduated from school in Japan?

NAMBA: Japan, yeah.

OTSUJI: You graduated and then you came back?

NAMBA: And then came back. I went to Washington Grammar School in Perkins.

OTSUJI: What grade did they put you in?

NAMBA: They put me in . . . at first I went in there in sixth grade. I was quite tall. But, I don't know ABC's. At that time, Japan instigating U.S. [United States]. They want to strike U.S. They driving... Japan snap finger. They want to bow heads down. They want to mind United States. But, lot of militarists strong say, "Hell with the U.S. politicians. We won't take no shit from those guys," he say. So Japan...Japan [inaudible]. . . At that time I remember. I tried to learn, you know, and then I read all the grammar school books I could read. Write... I was able to understand. Then the depression came. My brother and sister going . . . My mother want to send them to high school. They all need clothes. All the money saved was used and had to borrow.

OTSUJI: So, where did you work? You came back to the United States. You couldn't speak English. Where did you work?

- NAMBA: Farming. See, I'm working... they call it, you remember, grammar school in Perkins? You don't remember? Well, anyway, Washington School, made of bricks so it's still standing, I think the [Sacramento] County is still using it. Anyway, Oki, George's nursery, you know that, don't you?
- OTSUJI: Yes.
- NAMBA: Not where they are now. They were on Jackson Road. Matsuda's Nursery is over there near where Oki Nursery was. You remember that? On the corner, Matsuda Nursery was here, and on Jackson Road near Florin Road near the corner. Davis, he owned all the grape ranch way to Fruitridge.
- OTSUJI: Davis?
- NAMBA: Yeah, he own all the grape ranch. Your Uncle Roy's classmate in grammar school... Uncle Roy and the Davis kids, I remember he [Uncle Roy] was the top student. Anyway, I was reading, and then my English grammar they didn't teach me that time, so I was using broken English.
- OTSUJI: So how long did you stay in. . . what did you say. . . first grade?
- NAMBA: Not first grade. I didn't say. See, they put me in seventh grade.
- OTSUJI: Oh, I thought you said sixth grade. You came back, so you stayed in school one year?
- NAMBA: Yeah, yeah,
- OTSUJI: And then, by then you were eighteen?
- NAMBA: I was, yeah, eighteen or nineteen. And grammar school I was able to...but English, using perfect English, I couldn't make it up first. You know you have to pass. You have to all that. I didn't understand very clearly.
- OTSUJI: So did you graduate with that class? In Sacramento?
- NAMBA: I graduate. I graduate grammar school actually. They give me certificate. Sacramento. Perkins... And then meantime, I got a draftee notice.
- OTSUJI: That was your graduation present?
- NAMBA: That's graduation present.
- OTSUJI: From Uncle Sam.

- NAMBA: Yeah, right. [chuckling] And then that was my graduation gift... right.
- OTSUJI: How did you feel about that? You get this letter that says: "Welcome to the U.S. Army."
- NAMBA: Yeah.
- OTSUJI: Well, what did you think about that?
- NAMBA: Well, this is duty and
- OTSUJI: Did you ever wonder why you had to go?
- NAMBA: Yeah, I questioned all that. They say, "Well you are American citizen. You have a passport showing." I think someplace in my home. I don't know where, but I know I remember. I got the passport, and why returned to the United States? 1934, I guess. I came back. And I got a passport and then ... so anyway, I really suffer. I tell you, English grammar at the beginning, I was really coming and going. I don't know, past tense I didn't know. I suffer I tell you... hey, but anyway ...
- OTSUJI: Who helped you learn English at the school? Were there other kibei kids like you that were in the school so that they teach you separately? How could you go into a sixth grade class and learn English? I mean, it's not beginning like ABC's or short sentences.
- NAMBA: Beginning, yeah, so I have to go in. Okay, mathematics . . . I was way ahead and English I don't know past tense or whatever English.
- OTSUJI: So, math is as it is today. Japanese kids do better.
- NAMBA: So, Japanese way better than Americans in mathematics.
- OTSUJI: Even then that was true. Numbers are numbers.
- NAMBA: So, anyway, I had a passing grade. But, when it came to English grammar, dumb. So, they send me... I was in seventh grade. They sent me to second grade, third grade for grammar.
- OTSUJI: For just the English? Then they pulled you out and put you back into the right grade level?
- NAMBA: Yeah, right grade level. And then start reading. They promised. I was able to

pass, see? Mrs. Walker, she was the principal. She's a mean woman, but she mean well. She try to help me, so I didn't get mad. Mrs. Walker and two her sisters, younger sisters, were also teacher. And principal was Mrs. Walker.

OTSUJI: There were three Miss Walkers?

NAMBA: Huh?

OTSUJI: No, there was Mrs. Walker, the principal, and Mrs. Walker the teacher? And there were only two teachers ... I mean the two of them were the only ones in the school?

NAMBA: No, there were three actually.

OTSUJI: Another teacher?

NAMBA: Yeah, another teacher. They were nice. I mean doing their best, trying to learn. And a lot of people. There were three other kibei.

OTSUJI: Only three kibei? Who were the other two? Do you remember?

NAMBA: The other two were... I know one he died in New Guinea.

OTSUJI: MIS?

NAMBA: MIS [Military Intelligence Service], yeah. I was almost shot, I heard from grapevine he was assigned to different unit. I was at that time assigned to Marine Corps. I got almost shot from American soldier. It was after air raid, you have to foxhole, run like hell, you have to hide, all the coconut trees around there, all kinds of rocks and sand, and go inside. All the coconut tree, big one like that, you cut it and make a roof.

OTSUJI: So, what about 12 inches in diameter? Fourteen inches? Maybe more? How tall?

NAMBA: Yeah. You cut it, make a roof and under that you dig a hole and hide in there. When a bomb drops, they don't come straight up like this.

OTSUJI: Who's dropping the bombs? The Japanese or the Americans?

NAMBA: The Japanese. The Japanese Air Force. But see they were limited because you could tell, the pilots got shot down, and when shot down, captured, I gotta be there. I got all American soldiers [as] bodyguard and a hakujin [Caucasian]

who knows the Japanese language. I'm a non-commissioned officer but, that time all hakujins was officer. That much difference. Same group school graduate [intelligence class] Japanese just a little bit they understand. He gets officer grade. Japanese [Americans] get a rank of non-commissioned officer. They're lucky [hakujin]. See, I was a staff sergeant, a graduate, so I took that and, I wasn't mad. Funny feeling, boy I tell you, Japanese [Americans], it was pitiful in the daytime. At night one soldier said, "Why Japan declare war." I thought that was stupid. They wanted officer against the United States Army. Below the officer they all hate Japan.

OTSUJI: Who hates Japan?

NAMBA: Army officers. Lot of officers.

OTSUJI: The Japanese army?

NAMBA: American officers.

OTSUJI: Well, they declared war against Japan.

NAMBA: I almost got shot twice. I was almost dead, a lot of nisei got, I think four or five nisei got shot. A lot of Japanese interpreter, they don't know the American side, they thought it was the enemy, so at night time they shot them [Japanese Americans]. I got a rifle. Two GIs come around took my rifle. I cussed the hell out of them. It was scary.

OTSUJI: Weren't you wearing your American uniform?

NAMBA: American uniform.

OTSUJI: It didn't make any difference?

NAMBA: Yeah, they call it legging. At that time, I had a sergeant grade, technician sergeant. Gotta be just like a buck private. I said, "Look," I say, "if you shot me, you go ahead, kill me," I tell him, "but I going to leave my message and you going to be court-martialled and you going to be...." He got scared. But, anyway, "so okay, I take you to office." "Okay come on, let's go," I told him. He have rifle on my back, thinking I run away, see? "You know this officer," I told the captain, hakujin captain, "He thinks I the enemy and he

almost shot me.” “Shot you? Why do that? Are you sure you tried to kill him?” “Well, I didn’t know he’s on the American side, I thought he was the enemy Japanese.” You know? See, I was twice like that. And I’m still, I was lucky to come back. At that time, five Japanese [American] interpreters and translators got shot and killed. And this guy, this hakujin don’t believe me, he have a rifle in my back, he poked me and he say, “Let’s go in the office.” “So, I say okay. I say, drop the goddamn gun, I don’t like the goddamn rifle in my back.” “Well, you might escape. I just want to make sure. I want to take you to the office.”

OTSUJI: So how good was your English then? Was your English as good then as it is now?

NAMBA: Yeah. It was.

OTSUJI: So, you made yourself perfectly clear?

NAMBA: Clear, yeah.

OTSUJI: It wasn’t because they didn’t understand you?

NAMBA: No. But, my face is Japanese, see? Some hakujin don’t never saw the Japanese interpreters, the Japanese American soldiers. So, after that, you ought to see Colonel White, he’s on the G-2 intelligence section, he was the chief of the intelligence section. He say, “Namba, we made a mistake, I should have introduced all GI to Japanese American translators and interpreters.” I said, “I think it’s a good idea so I feel safe, too, if you introduced to everybody.” All the division headquarters, division people, loudspeaker, and then. . . “I want you to meet translator and interpreter,” he say “American soldiers, Japanese American soldiers.” They clap the hands, and welcome us. I was on the platform and then he was real nice.

[My mother said,] “Come home. The farm land is in your name. They don’t trust me. So, come home.” I needed to transfer, otherwise I can’t get in the house.

OTSUJI: Transferred what?

- NAMBA: Transferred my ranch's name. Transferred to my name.
- OTSUJI: Whose name was it in? Who bought the ranch?
- NAMBA: My old man supposed to have bought it, but name only I found that out. I went to real estate office and a Japanese American, what the hell was his name? I've forgotten, but it was in his name. He was a real estate and also Nojiri Company. He was over there. Secretary or something. You know how Japanese farmers, they need money to buy the fertilizer and seed to plant. When I got to Sacramento and looked it up, "Do me a favor, I just flew back from New Guinea and my mother and father say they couldn't get back in because it's in somebody else's name. It's not their name or my name."
- OTSUJI: So, this is as they were returning from the internment camp? Poston, concentration camp.
- NAMBA: Yeah. See, I went through a lot of holy hell. I went to the office and the office girl at the realty company. They don't want to change the name. So, I say, "Look, I served in the United States Army and I feel that I'm entitled to change the name to my name and I want to bring my folks back from concentration camp.
- OTSUJI: So, when they bought it, whose name did they buy it in?
- NAMBA: Well, see, that's funny.
- OTSUJI: And what year did they buy it?
- NAMBA: That was before the war. I think about five years before the war.
- OTSUJI: After you came back [from Japan]?
- NAMBA: After I came back. No, no. Before that. You know my name when I flew back, mother told me to come back and straighten it out, otherwise she say never go back to the own ranch, can't get into their own house.
- OTSUJI: So, go back to when they first came, when Senzo Namba first came, when did he own the property or when did he buy property? He couldn't, because he

was issei.⁵

NAMBA: Well, he's issei. He wasn't a citizen, so he's using this Nojiri Company. Nojiri, all the vegetable and fruits and all that market business.

OTSUJI: He was the middle man? The wholesaler?

NAMBA: Yeah. So, anyway, that guy pretty shrewd, you know, people told me.

OTSUJI: So was he nisei or issei?

NAMBA: He was old nisei.

OTSUJI: But he was an American citizen?

NAMBA: American citizen.

OTSUJI: So, he could buy property?

NAMBA: Yeah, so he could buy in his name only at that time. It [issei name] wasn't recorded. His name in the courthouse. That I found that out, so in order to get. . . I have to. . . he have to transfer for me my name.

OTSUJI: So, he got money from different issei and then bought property, big chunk and then he just had a gentleman's agreement that they owned it and sometime later they were going to transfer the names? Okay. So then, you came back, and the land was in his name?

NAMBA: No.

OTSUJI: Who's name was it in?

NAMBA: Oh, wait a minute. When I came back, that time, yeah, nisei or somebody else. But he was the owner, buyer . . . owner, that time he didn't have old enough to try somebody else's name .

OTSUJI: So, your American born brothers either weren't born yet or weren't old enough?

NAMBA: No, that time I was only 17 years old so I'm not old enough to change the name to my name. So, he was left it there and then war broke out and he went to camp. And then mother, father wants to come home, and I rode back on

⁵ The California Alien Land Law, enacted in 1913 and 1920 prevented purchase of property by those ineligible for U.S. citizenship. This California law affected all people from Asia who were unable to obtain citizenship by naturalization under the federal law.

express airport, and he say, "It's under the name of Murakami."

OTSUJI: Do you remember his first name?

NAMBA: First name, I don't remember. Anyway, he don't want to depend on him, maybe he wants to keep, he don't want to sign over my name. So, I mentioned this to real estate office. I said, "I want to transfer this to my name and how would I go about this?" "Well, you have to find the name, who, right now, I don't have it, you have to go to the courthouse." So, I went over there, courthouse. Japanese name was Murakami or something, other name I forgot. So, I said, "Well, I tell you, I want to buy this and what's his name Murakami wants to sell it. Actually, I want to get it back, this property twenty acres. So okay, we do that. So, he give me hakujin real estate people was all for it and "I think you're entitled to get the ranch back." And we transferred. "Look like you how many years spent in the U.S. Army?" "Well, I spent exactly four years and two months." "Wow, that much? Then you went all through the war?" "Yes, I was under General MacArthur, I spent two months and then they sent me out as translator and interpreter in 1st Marine Corps."

OTSUJI: You were at MacArthur's headquarters?

NAMBA: Yeah, MacArthur headquarters. I report to MacArthur's headquarters from San Francisco. I already graduated intelligence school. I had a certificate and everything. That was a good feeling. Anyway, they no question asked. They say, "You're entitled to get your ranch back." That make me feel real good, you know? And then I went through all that and wasn't that much about transfer the name, and all that. I pay for that. Then I need to go back. Before that I got married, before I straighten out the ranch, then I went to see your mother in what state was it? I forgot.

OTSUJI: Minneapolis? Minnesota?

NAMBA: Minnesota? Minnesota was...that's intelligence school. Camp Savage. I was the first class. That [place] was a old man's World War I veteran homes. That's where they [intelligence school] took over. Old man was there and he

say, "You guys get the hell out of here! This is my home. I've been here ever since the first World War. I don't want to move!" Then around one hundred people want to fight to go back to the Military Intelligence School.

OTSUJI: That was where, Camp Savage?

NAMBA: Camp Savage yeah. I was in the first class, and then..

OTSUJI: Oh so you didn't go to Monterey? Was there a Monterey Language Institute?
[The Language School was first established at the Presidio of San Francisco, currently, in Monterey, CA]

NAMBA: Before that. Before you went to Camp Savage.

OTSUJI: Camp Savage was first?

NAMBA: First, yeah, first language school, but there's Monterey base they started very few people, student. And then went to Minneapolis, Minnesota, Camp Savage, and then they gathered all the nisei that speak Japanese. They got all the interrogator, all the hakujin, officers. We were just buck private, see. I was at that time, up for corporal you know, first buck private, next one is corporal. I was up for that, but they transfer me to the school. Captain Smith was first, I was Army. Captain Smith was real nice to me. I was his boy. All the other GIs get jealous, you know? And then I won't forget, "Namba, I like the Japanese people, but don't get me wrong, sometime I have to give them, use strong words and so don't mind, just say yes or no and don't say nothing", he say. He was nice. I was his boy. All these hakujin GIs get jealous, "God damn, you suck ass!" Captain says, [laughing] all the GIs get jealous. But, he likes me, what can I do?

OTSUJI: So you had a mixed unit? Mixed race unit?

NAMBA: That time was all mixed, hakujin, nihonjin, [Caucasians and Japanese Americans] you know.

OTSUJI: This was in 1941? Before Pearl Harbor?

NAMBA: Yeah. 1941. See that time, after war broke out, see. When war broke out... four months before, my Captain Smith, he was the company commander, he

told me, "I want to tell you something, but," he say, "you promise not to tell anybody." I get close up, "Sir, I won't tell nobody, when I say I won't tell nobody, I won't." "Good. I'll tell you. Sit down." I sit down. "Did you read the latest newspaper?" "Yeah," I said. "What do you think of it?" "Well, it looks like war coming. Japan is stubborn, so, they won't listen to the United States." "That's right. United States has to go to war. I don't want you to tell nobody, now. This is from war department," he say. "All nisei soldiers like you, you going to be going to concentration camp." I say, "Why sir, I don't do anything. I went to Japan, but I went to learn Japanese." "Well, I tell you, American government need like you," he say. "They want to know lot of them raised here can't read the Chinese character, which is kanji, and you can read kanji and you can translate it, understand," he say. "So, they need you. They need more. You going to school, its intensive course. They pound it within six months, and if you don't pass, you going to be hard labor camp." "What? I don't want to go to hard labor camp." I say. "I try my best and I want to pass the tests." "Good. That's all I want to know. After pass, maybe I might call you back," he say. "So, I say I'm expecting that." He was real nice to me.

OTSUJI: What was his name?

NAMBA: Captain Smith. First name I've forgotten. He was the company commander.

OTSUJI: What was the company number?

NAMBA: Company Headquarter was San Luis Obispo, the 40th division. That was a real Army camp. And then while I was there, he told me, he say, you first. . . [It was] about eight months, no wait a minute, seven months before Pearl Harbor. At that time, he say, "You promise me if I say anything, you not going to tell nobody. Nobody! You know? You promise me?" "Yes, sir! I promise you, I won't say to nobody, I won't say nothing about war," I say. "You believe me."

OTSUJI: So, was he a personal friend? Did he become friends with you, that's why he

was telling you this or he was telling you this in a business military capacity?

NAMBA: Military capacity, but he told me you promise me know nothing about the war. He say, "You not going to tell, if you promise me, I'll tell you." I say, "No, sir. I won't say nothing to nobody about war"

OTSUJI: Did he say this to everybody?

NAMBA: Of all Japanese Americans, he call me in his office, just me, he called me into his office.

OTSUJI: Did he tell the other Japanese Americans?

NAMBA: Japanese, at that time, I was his company, I was the only one. Maybe other company, I don't know.

OTSUJI: Oh, you were the only one in his company.

NAMBA: In his company.

OTSUJI: How many people in that company?

NAMBA: Company? Oh, 100, at least 150, see? Then he say, "Okay, I'll tell you. Did you read the paper lately? What do you think about Japan?" "I think Japan making mistake." "You're right. I say Japan is going to be war against it, and its coming. But, I just come back from staff meeting and this is from the war department."

END SESSION II

Tape 2, Side 1 (to be continued)

SESSION III,
BEACHCOMBER, SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CALIFORNIA

Continue Tape 2, Side 1, September 1, 1997

[Portions deleted during editing]

OTSUJI: So with that, I think we are going to continue with our oral history we did quite well yesterday. We did several hours worth. I think when we ended we were talking about your army experience, U.S. Army experience, and this was 1941?

NAMBA: Yes, I got drafted in 1941.

OTSUJI: So, let me see, you were a tech sergeant?

NAMBA: Yeah. Technical sergeant. After graduate Military Intelligence School, they give us corporal ranking... equivalent to corporal. They give us a stripe. I was real proud of myself.

[Interruption]

OTSUJI: Okay, so you were drafted in the U.S. Army on March 26, 1941?

NAMBA: Yes.

OTSUJI: And you met at the Perkins Japanese School?

NAMBA: No, I was not mad.

OTSUJI: Not mad, I said Perkins Japanese School, is that where you met your other two friends?

NAMBA: What do you mean "other two friends?" Oh, you mean draftees?

OTSUJI: Draftees. Tadao Hayashi and Sam [Kitagawa]?

End Tape 2, Side 1

SESSION III (continued)

BEACHCOMBER, SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CALIFORNIA

Begin Tape 2, Side 2, September 1, 1997

OTSUJI: Tape 2, Side 2, September 1, 1997 and we've talked about getting drafted into the U.S. Army. We've already. I think, discussed a little about Camp Roberts located at California.

NAMBA: Yeah, Camp Roberts was all rookies, and basic training we finished at Camp Roberts.

OTSUJI: And you stayed there for about four months?

NAMBA: Yeah, six months. Transferred back to 40th Infantry Division,

OTSUJI: And what company was that?

NAMBA: That was company C.

OTSUJI: Or D?

NAMBA: Company D, I forgot, some place in there, not company A or B. Company C or D, I forgot.

OTSUJI: All right, that's probably easy to check. And then that 40th Infantry division was located at San Luis Obispo in California. And then what was the training like there?

NAMBA: Training in infantry, including machine gun, see, so I had machine gun training, setting it up on tripod and like this tripod low and on top of that put a 30 machine gun. I was an assistant machine gunner. And then as I go along, Captain Smith call me in again. "You going to school. Anybody told you?" "No, Sir, nobody told me." "Okay, now you going to intelligence school. I understand you have a background on Japanese reading and writing?" So I say "Yes." "You going to go to school." About two weeks later, I have to leave from San Luis Obispo to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

OTSUJI: So, you were only there for a few weeks in San Luis Obispo?

NAMBA: San Luis Obispo, yeah. I was there, well, I'd say about three months. Yeah, I

was there three months basic training, I finished at Camp Roberts, then I was transferred to infantry division, that's actual fighting division.

OTSUJI: Is that the division where you were the only Japanese American?

NAMBA: 40th Division, no, I was in company C, they got Company A,B,C.

OTSUJI: And you were in company C?

NAMBA: Company C, yeah.

OTSUJI: Okay, how many other nisei were in there, nisei or kibei?

NAMBA: Well, that time, I don't remember in my company because lot of company there, I think division...

OTSUJI: One thousand, I'm just guessing?

NAMBA: Yeah, well, that time about all the 40th Division nisei I understand about around one hundred fifty people. Nisei soldiers. Some of them assigned to artillery division and regular rifle infantry just give them a bayonet and rifles. I happen to be assigned to a machine gun company. Machine gun is on a tripod. You set the machine gun on the tripod when you start firing, see? So, I took training on that, and then I passed. That was already war. Captain Smith he call me one day in his orderly room. He say, "I want to tell you, something." So I said, "What is it?" "Did you see the newspaper lately?" I say, "Yes, Sir." "What did you notice there?" "Nothing but war, headline and everything. Look like it's going to be war with Japan and all that, Japanese Navy and all that infantry moving out from China, so.."

OTSUJI: So Japan was fighting in China?

NAMBA: China.

OTSUJI: And the Germans were fighting in Europe?

NAMBA: Europe, yeah.

OTSUJI: And the Japanese and the Germans had already become allies?

NAMBA: Already become allies, yeah, I remember that see? So.

OTSUJI: So, why did the Germans and the Japanese decide to become allies?

NAMBA: Well, that was I have a question on. I ask a lot of question, I was interested on

the war. Why war started? Why American involved in the war? Because Japanese was already fighting with China, in Manchuria and China, and all the south sea islands like the Philippines, United States Army increase more American soldier strength in Philippines, they brought all different kinds of air force, and artillery units, and all that.

OTSUJI: So, this was before Pearl Harbor?

NAMBA: Before Pearl Harbor, yeah, see? So, I say war is... god damn Japan. Why they don't use more good diplomacy, and forget about war. Why Japan turn against? They made a big shot foreign, all that ministers making speech for United States troops to get out from Asia. See? Because Japan was fighting with China, and China crying over to America so naturally America wants to send troops over there, Navy around China Sea and naturally Japan will get mad saying this is nothing but American shouldn't get involved in. They broadcast and everything. They were fighting with China and Japan not United States.

OTSUJI: So what was Japan trying to accomplish? What was Japan's military objective?

NAMBA: Well, military objective was United States already in the Philippines. Troops, see? Coast Guard in Japan Sea, United States Navy coast watching, submarine in there for Japan's Navy's movement, see? So, Japan don't like that, so they say get out, give them time to get out, but they won't move, so, Japan submarine come up and nighttime come up and bomb American ships they sunk and everything..

OTSUJI: So, at this time Japan had already invaded China?

NAMBA: Yeah, that time, Manchuria and China, Shanghai, Hong Kong, big Japan Sea port was already occupied.

OTSUJI: Occupied by Japan?

NAMBA: Yeah. And then, the newspaper exaggerate anything Japan did, they don't want to broadcast to the world, but United States looking for that kind of,

United States wants to get a war involved in, wants to bring war economy, see? In United States a lot people out of a job and all that so United States wants to interrupt, involved in that war. War with China and Japan, it's their war. United States got nothing you know, step in, and Japan didn't like it, see? Japan try to conquer, overpopulating, so, they have to send some kind of inland people to the China. They want to, at the end, they want to make peace because China is yellow race just like Japanese, not white race, Japanese and Chinese, all yellow race so they want to get together, but when get together, Japan and China get strong, expand more army and United States sending Hong Kong, and Shanghai got troops. United States got troops in, Philippines, got troops in, all U.S. Navy got airbases. Japan didn't like all that. Japan want U.S. to get out, and then United States don't want to get out, they want to stay there. United States President [Franklin] Roosevelt had a tight economy, see, so make war economy and create work for people, see?

OTSUJI: So what were the Russians doing?

NAMBA: Russians? At that time, the Russians were already fighting with the Germans.

OTSUJI: So they were already fighting with the Germans?

NAMBA: Germans, yeah. Well, at that time, they didn't declare, Germans didn't declare the war so they call it incidents. Japan the same way. They were fighting with American garrison troops in Shanghai, and Philippine Manila, England, France, United States had bases. They used to call national but they don't put Japanese Navy in there because Japanese Navy and France and England Navy, they fighting see? They call it incident, they don't say war, they say incident. So anyway, American use pretty good propaganda and tell people lies, and Japan wants to make war rest of world to put together with United States Army and try to get Japan, they want to take it out of Asia, all the Japanese Army, see? That's black and white and in the newspaper, so anybody read it, I say United States is smart, intelligence war and really try to let people know that Japan was bad. None of their business, United States stay out of there,

see.

OTSUJI: What about in Europe?

NAMBA: Europe is then that time, they made a treaty. Italy and Germany and Japan. In Japan all three countries they call Axis. Axis, see? And then keep try to busy on the European country for all that, and get together, involve in Russia, and Russia went in there and France and England and then they fighting because they don't want all the German soldiers goes in England or either France. They want to fight on somebody else territory, see, so they don't damage civilians and all that war. All those guys, Roosevelt pretty smart, I tell you. Hey, he's war monger actually, see? Anyway, all this, I say United States, France, and England, those all white people's countries, see, and those guys already Germany was fighting with England and France in Europe. So, naturally, United States, those countries ask United States for war supplies, troops, to help so United States send it over there to help France. That's how friction come in and they start fighting. In Asia, same thing. They were already... Chinese, I was reading paper, I was guessing, oh that's good, Japan and China going to be peace and they want to make peace. They want to give up army or navy together so nobody touch it after they make treaty and Japan and China get together, they took troop and all the army and navy's bases, they told them to get out, go back to Europe and that's how it started, beginning to start fighting, and then bigger and bigger. And United States stepped in and then give them, increase more manpower, fighting manpower and all that. That's how they started. Japan was really, at that time already I say, "Where in the hell get all the food for the soldiers?"

OTSUJI: Japanese soldiers?

NAMBA: Japanese soldiers. For them, starving, and then some of them they capture, and beginning of the war, I was in Australia. They send bombers, I was in bomber, a Chinese Captain, he was Hawaiian, and he speak Japanese, so they send him for interpreter and he was a military man.

- OTSUJI: So, this was for the U.S. Army? The United States Army 40th division infantry? So, you had a Hawaiian American GI who was your commanding officer?
- NAMBA: Well, at that time they made the basic training, but too many Japanese soldiers against it, going over there to fight their own countryman.
- OTSUJI: Who was it, the Japanese, the Japanese American soldiers did not want to go or is it because the commanding officers were Caucasians and did not want to put them in charge?
- NAMBA: Right, yeah.
- OTSUJI: Both correct?
- NAMBA: Yeah, see there's a lot of politics, and they try to hide it, to American side, so American don't look like made war, but United States politicians really pretty smart, pretty shrewd. When reading the paper, just about could exactly tell, America wants to create the war, create war economy, and then they don't want to send Caucasians to Europe, MacArthur run away from Philippines, MacArthur had American troops, couple of divisions in there, see? That base, he want to keep it, but Japanese so strong and powerful Navy, infantry and Marine Corps, Japanese, they chased all the MacArthur out, he withdraw his troops, withdraw to Australia. And then that time, they made special crew, first kibei, lot of kibei, they turned it down. They don't want to go [inaudible]. They put them in hard labor, United States did. A lot of Christians they'll fight against Germany so they training they send German. Japanese good American soldier only, not no English American hakujin. That's Japanese soldiers they send it over there so they tried to and Japan.... So, nisei soldiers lot of them shot, all those guys that time. Japanese people sending their kids to the University, you know? Educated so...
- OTSUJI: Are you talking about Japan, Japanese or Japanese Americans? Nisei, were in college?
- NAMBA: No, I'm talking about Japanese American soldiers. I talking about nisei

soldiers. So, they send it over there and lot of just send it over there whole bunch of Japanese soldiers left it over there in Europe, American soldiers. Washington pretty smart. They test it see?

OTSUJI: So, we're talking about the 442nd and 100th?

NAMBA: Yeah, and then lot of, they got a lot of supporting like machine gunner, artillery, export you know you put artillery big bomb like that and then shoot up all, see. So anyway, America, England, they pretty... they tell lie right in front of people they think it's true, and dummy people they believe it, see?

OTSUJI: There's a lot of bad things that went on then. Japanese Americans ended up in camp, too. Concentration camps. So, there's a lot of racism, that's why these stories are very important because it's good to get historical information out.

NAMBA: Oh yeah, don't say too much about hakujin. Hakujin... still some of them strong pro-American you know. America was great, and honest. That's a bunch of baloney. Don't say anything like that, but you can't trust the white man.

OTSUJI: Well, that brings up the issue of loyalty, too, I suppose. How did you...? What did you consider yourself to be?

NAMBA: Loyalty to the United States?

OTSUJI: Yes.

NAMBA: Well, first of all, they give us third degree question.

OTSUJI: Who is "they"?

NAMBA: American officers.

OTSUJI: Because you were already in the Army? You were drafted in early 1941.

Okay, so they were asking you about loyalty issues. So, how did you answer?

NAMBA: They select me. They found out, you know, they say they question, "You were in Japan and you went back and study Japanese and all that, is that... who sent you back? Is that American government, or Japanese government, they sending lot of spies, Japanese spies in United States." "I don't know

anything about the spies, Japanese spies in United States.” “No, we know.”

“Well okay, I know you got all the information from your American government. So I have to follow through this is order from Washington.” If I turn it down, I don’t want to do it, spy job or anything, they going to send me to... during wartime. . . execution. They liable to shot me. So, he question me, this American guy, “What do you think about war, Japan against the United States?” “Well, I think Japanese wrong. Japanese against the war, you can’t beat United States. United States is an industrial country, and raw material number one in the world. They got all the oil, iron, and food, big farmers, so they could feed all the soldiers and the Navy. Japan’s limited, they want to buy rice from China, some from United States, they boycott, cut all supplies. Japan’s a small country, people, lot of people in Japan, they’re not soldier, but they got to eat so they don’t have rice. So, they make lot of water in rice and boil it and expand it so he could eat rice but just real soft rice and stomach won’t hold all day long, so they really tighten it up on right food. So, I see it with my own eyes and Japan don’t have a chance to win the war. Yeah, I think the American government know about that. Americans need a lot of... they have to create work. Depression. United States want to create jobs for everybody. So, they made,” he told me, “this is just between you and I but don’t tell nobody,” he say you know. Something like that if I say Captain so and so told me this and that he gets in problem see? Captain Smith himself he say, “This is wrong. Japan, they not going to. . . , I can’t understand, he say, they can’t win, why they declare the war to the United States?” “Well,” I told him, “this is my opinion. Japan was, you ask me, Japan wants to control Asia, so try to get all American white people try to get them out from those territory, that’s where friction comes in.” “So that you are right. But don’t say. This is between you and I, but I know that, they creating jobs.” Hakujin Captain told me that, but he told me to just keep shut up, don’t say anything, something like that to public...[laughter].

OTSUJI: So, what about back to the fact that you were Japanese raised, even though you were born in the United States, you had spent a few years in Japan growing up? So, was the issue of loyalty . . . did that come up? Did they ask you in the Army, which country are you loyal to? What did you say? What were your feelings?

NAMBA: Yeah, they ask me and then from beginning, he say, "Are you . . . I understand you study Japanese. You like Japan?" "No. If I like Japan, I was eighteen years old, I would stay in Japan. But, my folks want me to come back. You finish Japanese education, grammar school and two years in high school, equivalent to United States schooling, so, finish this and I want to come back."

OTSUJI: Come back to Sacramento?

NAMBA: Sacramento. And if I stay in Japan, they need a lot of soldiers, and Japan's wrong. I told them at that time that Japan was wrong. Why sending soldiers to China and occupy? Chinese don't want to lose territory or job or anything or move out from home so they mad and they kill Japanese soldiers. That's where friction come in and they were fighting. So, naturally Chinese wants help from England and France and United States.

OTSUJI: So, you came back to the United States about 1934? Somewhere, so it was one or two years after the depression started?

NAMBA: Yeah, I came back in 19.... Before the depression, I came back. I told them, my grandmother wants to keep me. My uncle he's mayor you know, and no boys, he got Yoshiko-obasan is my mother's sister, she's married, [lives] about 20-30 miles maybe... changed it to . . . she's married to the someone, with Okayama-ken prefecture office job. He married that but after awhile, Japan declared war to United States and China and Russia, so they didn't... they need lot of soldiers, so they drafting all the healthy soldiers.

OTSUJI: So that was Yoshiko's...?

NAMBA: Yoshiko-obasan's husband.

- OTSUJI: And his last name was Naito? N-a-i-t-o. So, they drafted him? Young married man.
- NAMBA: They drafted him, young man. And then he got sick in army, and then they released him, but he didn't live too long after. He died.
- OTSUJI: What do you mean, he died, and you didn't see him?
- NAMBA: I didn't see the funeral or nothing, I heard from that man's wife, that's my mother's sister, Yoshiko-obasan, see. She really helped me.
- OTSUJI: So, where were you? You were already in the United States?
- NAMBA: Yeah, United States Army.
- OTSUJI: Did you correspond back and forth to Japan after you came back here? How often did you write?
- NAMBA: I wrote once a year. At least when New Year's come. And, war's over. Japan surrendered.. But, I was at that time 24th division in New Guinea, south sea island. And then Japan surrendered. And then war with Japan I mean all... you don't want to send American soldiers in Japanese island. But, Japan don't want that. And don't want soldier, American soldier in Japan's territory. So, Japan surrendered. But, they requested the world to see that they stay out of Japan, Japan's outside the territory. Japan's territory. You know.
- OTSUJI: Which war did they surrender to?
- NAMBA: The Second World War.
- OTSUJI: This is what was...we jumped a whole, a whole bunch of years.
- NAMBA: Yeah.
- OTSUJI: We went from the depression, and the Yoshiko Naito's husband dying and didn't he die in another war?
- NAMBA: No.
- OTSUJI: It was World War II?
- NAMBA: No. No, he came back, discharged and he came back.
- OTSUJI: I know. But, which, what was he doing? He was in Manchuria someplace.

Was that the same World War II?

NAMBA: World War II. And...

OTSUJI: Before the United States got involved?

[Portions deleted during editing]

OTSUJI: Well, what is your feeling? Are you an American?

NAMBA: I am in America.

OTSUJI: Was there any doubt that you were an American citizen?

NAMBA: Yeah. I got nothing against it, American citizen. I am going to do, you know I mean, I don't want to do dirty work. I mean, really, I got initiated. I know the Japanese government regulations and meetings and all that.

OTSUJI: In other words, you felt yourself caught between two countries?

NAMBA: Right.

OTSUJI: Is that a fair thing to say?

NAMBA: Yeah. Between it, I got caught. You are right.

OTSUJI: And so, I mean did that... what did you think about that? Or, did you even have time to think because you were already in basic training and you were in the United States Army and drafted...

NAMBA: But, that time I know Japan no chance. You don't have chance to win. Japan was so much...and then , they declare war to Philippines and Manchuria and China. So, naturally, France and England and United States they are "Goody, goody-goody!" You know, you could tell that they work together, but they try to attack Japan.

OTSUJI: It must have been very difficult because you knew what Japan was like having lived there. And you knew that they were very... the country was rather poor, I suspect.

NAMBA: You could tell . . . I was asleep after start thinking, you know. Japan, why did you get in the war? Japan don't have a chance! And then declared war to the United States, richest country with raw materials, most powerful country in the world. So, I was against it 100%. God damn it. Stupid, you know. You

can't, never, win, I told them. In order to win, they should negotiate with the China. They could raise rice and wheat and all the vegetables they want. They could supply all the Japanese soldiers, and Japan civilians. See. But, anyway, that war was... I don't know why Tojo is a... . He's a hardhead. He don't listen to all the civilians or nobody.

OTSUJI: Who was Tojo?

NAMBA: Tojo. He was a leader in war... a leader in Japan. Even the Emperor was meeting with Tojo. And the Emperor wants to make peace. He can't conquer the world. So, he got to come up with somehow to make the more...a lot of people and they were studying long time the country's economy, the country's military power, and they knew some of that already. Japan don't have a Chinaman's chance in there, fight against, France, England and the United States. Those guys are all white people that's why the more they all get together, you know. See. So, I know. Of course, that time if I say something, Japanese side to white man, they probably put me already in jail. Or either hard labor camp. All the spies and all that try to destroy the American government or American camp soldiers and all that. And, they could throw in jail. See.

OTSUJI: So you didn't feel free to say what you thought.

NAMBA: No, no. Can't. They...if I say something, you know how a lot of hakujin soldiers there, they make reports to the headquarters, and they spy. Those guys, boy, shrewd. Shrewd...hakujin. So you can't, like you, you can't say bad about the main office of hospital and all that. Ah, hakujin. Just, you could just listen, you know. See. And then just stay there, but then never suggest for the people thinks "while you are pro-Japanese, we don't want that kind of people." They might give you a bad time to try to squeeze you out. See. So, not much... but, I was.... Nobody know. If they open my brain and I was pro-Japanese over 50%. Because I was born and raised . . . and I was raised here Japanese and Japanese was kicked around all over. White man come

first. And that kind of thing going on.

OTSUJI: What about the niseis?

NAMBA: All that...

OTSUJI: Was your thinking the same as the niseis or was it different? And did you get into discussions with American born...

NAMBA: Oh, yeah. I discussed with some nisei is lot of pro-American and some of lot of, not half, I think three-quarter. I think, they don't want to come out. Lot of pro-Japanese, Americans...

OTSUJI: Among the nisei or...

NAMBA: Yeah, among the nisei, yeah, among the nisei a lot of them. But now we can't... that's why Japan lost, they don't have power. So, whatever the United States say, you have to stay on the United States side. Otherwise, they admit to being pro-Japanese, they don't want no government job, no, you know, see. You got to use good policy.

OTSUJI: So, how did the other Japanese... did you talk to the other kibeis? How did they think? What was their...

NAMBA: Well, almost same thinking because we have to... we can't turn against the American government. See. Otherwise, they will put us in jail and if you are pro-... you know, they'll make miserable for you.

OTSUJI: Well, they did do that in World War II.

NAMBA: Oh yeah, in World War II, they did, yeah. But, they have to prove it. You know. They give us gun, they think they are going to shoot American people, but they didn't, see. Within their heart . . . Japanese starving, no ammunition, and the gun carry empty ammunition, gun all rusty, and already skin and bones.

OTSUJI: These were the POWs?

NAMBA: POWs.

OTSUJI: Or, the citizens, the people living in Japan?

NAMBA: No, all those guys were war soldiers. And boy, that was a hard feeling for me.

Nighttime... after dark, after meeting, I was already assigned to the war division, I don't want to show it to the hakujin and I was, well, still like Japanese . . . Because you know, where they were going to put me, hard labor, or if they at the end they would be liable to, depend on officers in charge. They might put me into. . . this guy here, pro-Japanese, send to a labor camp or something, you know. Officer recommend that, they do it. I seen it couple of guys here. . . I was going to Military Intelligence School. And there were hakujin was in each class, two or three, they could understand Japanese. They checking to see if was pro-Japanese. But, that... I took it right away, I say, "Oh oh." And then if pro-Japanese was mentioned, they send to hard labor camp. Japanese kibei, they warned me. They say, "You guys never against United States government, but they make me miserable and I can't move, I can't, come back to America because I made a statement for United States was bad."

OTSUJI: Did they send them to Japan?

NAMBA: No. Hard labor. So, you know, dig telephone pole hole or any dirty work. See. They don't serve as American soldiers. They segregated. See?

OTSUJI: So, this was your MIS group?

NAMBA: Yeah. MIS even, I could tell. A lot of pro-American officers in there. They speak a little bit, you know. See. American speak...

OTSUJI: A little bit of Japanese?

NAMBA: Even Japanese, too. Even Japanese become American. If I act funny, if I say something bad about the American government, they making report it. See. And this guy here was kibei just like me he went to Japan and came back. And then graduated high school and couple a years in college, you know. He pro-Japanese, but when he talked in front of hakujin, looked like real American, see. But, he talked to me among all the Japanese, he talked Japanese, you know, he pro-Japanese. So, I know, I got to use head. See, my inside feelings, that's why I have. All the war airplane, American war plane,

they strafe all that Japanese army small division here or there. They destroyed them. They dropped the bomb, just pound the hell out of them. Japan had no chance. See?

OTSUJI: In Japan?

NAMBA: Yeah. And then after give up....

[Interruption]

But, anyway, I was in a bad position, boy, I tell you. You don't want to appear pro-Japanese. "God damn, he is a Jap spy!" You know how some hakujin ends up like that. I don't want those guys to spy. You know wartime spy? You get hard labor, confine rest of your life. Or, real bad one, they don't mind, and talk back to officers and this and that. Take it out on a fields. Killed. And nobody knows he got killed by the enemy or something like that, you know. Shit. So you better watch it. Boy, I tell you, you have to stay in America and don't talk like Japan, she, sister city, just forget it about the Japanese, or about Japan. Stay, look like you're a nice American. Well, you know, for the government. I'm not, I won't say, all the American regulations and rules are bad. Some of them are good, some are good soldiers. There are good soldiers in America, too. See. They, some of them, like the Japanese. See. They like the Japanese characteristic, honest, and you could trust, those kind, so you have to stay on that feel fine. Don't go out against American.

OTSUJI: So, how did you want us, your children, to grow up?

NAMBA: All grow up. You can't...

End Tape 2, Side 2

SESSION III (continued)

BEACHCOMBER, SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CALIFORNIA

Begin Tape 3, Side 1, September 1, 1997

OTSUJI: This is Eileen Otsuji interviewing Mr. Minoru Namba on September 1, 1997. This is a continuation, Tape 3, Side 1. Okay, so now we will get back to the question that was left unanswered: "How did you want your children to grow up?" I was born in 1946, so now I am 51 years old. And how did you want me to be. To be Japanese?

NAMBA: No.

OTSUJI: I look Japanese. I don't speak Japanese with a very good accent, even though I've tried.

NAMBA: So, you born and raised here and, I think, stay on American side. That's for your sake. So, I know where Japanese get hurt. And you want to help the Japanese people. This is same race, you know. Blood all same; blood thicker than water. So, stay Japanese side. Help make good Japanese American. You know, understand, and all that. We are not living in Japan, we in the America so, whatever Americans do, we have to go along with, with them.

OTSUJI: So, if I went to Japan and lived, how do you think they would accept me?

NAMBA: In Japan, it's rough. Japanese people, small island, and overpopulated. So, soon as...when get depression or something, and lot of people lose the company, going broke and lose their job and they don't have money to buy it, and all that. So, it's a hard decision. But, I think you and me, more or less.... I like the Japanese people, honest people. But, dishonest people I don't care for but, Japanese... stay when the people hungry, why I think... I should have, I feel like I am going to help them buy the rice and gifts, you know, and all that. But, it's a hard decision. You want to be American. And some American people are, it says, born in America, but yet, Japanese is Japanese, but, some hakujin told me many times. But, I leave it up to each individual

thinking and feeling towards American people.

OTSUJI: What do you think makes a person an American?

NAMBA: Well, first thing is you are born here and educated here. So, it's hard decision. But, since you speak language perfect, and you have good job here, so I think you do best you can to get along with all Japanese and American.

OTSUJI: Am I Japanese or am I American?

NAMBA: You are Japanese American. So you are American born and raised here. And I think it should... well, when they get in trouble, then they say fight with China, and Japan they lost the war. And Chinese war kind of put a rough law and like take... lock peoples in for pro-Japanese government or something. So, well, best to do is stay as American. Do the best you can to American government.

OTSUJI: So, even today, 51 years after the war, how do you feel about being an American? Or, how would you describe yourself?

NAMBA: Ah, American is a rich country, all the natural resources, and lot of smart people... in the United States, so then they could, smart people, so they could invent something that machinery, or something, right away, and...all this doctors, medicals, medicines and all that. It's a number one in the world, so I think it is best to stay, for your generation or younger generation should stay on American. You can't go wrong.

OTSUJI: But, how about for yourself?

NAMBA: Myself, I saw own eye. I went to Japan and all that. War with United States is wrong. Any country is bad because United States is the richest country in the world. And when they get hit and disrespect, they get mad and they'll create something for... you know. You act like that so you should never act. Sort of respect white people.

OTSUJI: So, do you think that because you live here, that you have the opportunity to succeed? Was that lucky for you?

NAMBA: Yeah, I think so. Because Japan is country, small country that so many people,

so many people didn't have enough rice, food, and they always fighting for more rice from China, India, all these South Sea Islands. So, they having hard time making best. But, United States so rich country, they could acre after acre they could plant wheat and rice.

OTSUJI: So, you keep referring to "they" being other people or "they" being, you know, white or "they" being American. Do you feel yourself as an American, or do you feel yourself as being something separate?

NAMBA: No, you should feel American, because you were born and raised here.

OTSUJI: No, I am talking about you.

NAMBA: Oh, me?

OTSUJI: You.

NAMBA: Yeah. I should respect all American here and, I think I'll forget about Japan government because actually, I born and raised here and only thing I was, I got sent from my parents sent to Japan to get education. Because then even I came home from Japan I was behind language speaking and American custom. I was way behind. But, I'm beginning to act like American, because I forget Japan. Actually, this is my country. I raised here and when I was small. But, I don't know anything so folks sent me back to Japan and educate, came, return, here.

OTSUJI: What did your parents say?

NAMBA: Well, parents is, after war's over, they say, you are American, so you did good job in American government. Even my uncle told me that, too.

OTSUJI: Who was that?

NAMBA: Uncle Watanabe, Kumago. Yeah. So, lot of people understand now and understanding.

OTSUJI: Did you talk to... did you have an occasion to talk to other isseis who did not feel the same as your parents?

NAMBA: Well, lot of people, when war's over, I got discharged, I came back. Came home. Middle of the night. And some of them, daytime come by. And some

of a few, I still remember. He tells me, he said, "Are you Namba?" "Yes, I am Namba." "When you were in the American army and you went to Japan, didn't you injure the Japanese soldiers a lot?" I said, "No, I didn't do that kind of thing. Always took care of captured document, captured prisoner of war, just interrogate. What kind of unit? How they doing? How's the supply? How's the medical? You getting the medical? You getting food rationing?" So, they didn't, and I feel sorry for them. Every one of them go on starvation, starved to death. And they don't have medicine. They got often, off and on, malaria attack and they on dirt and fields, and so I feel real sorry for them. And, so ... against, I was actually against the war. And "I don't want to see no more this kind of war again," I told them. I believe it. Japan government and all the military leader was bad. And I thinking is different from ordinary civilian.

OTSUJI: What was it like when you were in Japan for the Occupation?

NAMBA: Occupation. I was Japanese; I feel funny; I feel sorry for the children and the mother. Most of male, man was, most in Army, Navy. They were ordered to join the Navy and Army. So, when they left over, they just young children and mothers. All the mothers were farming just like real farmer doing man's job because they got call in army. That was real sad.

OTSUJI: So, where did you go? You went ...

NAMBA: I went to training. I went to Camp Roberts for basic training and then finished that I was in 40th division, 40th infantry division. But infantry division, they got artillery unit and machine gun unit. And I was, they send me in a machine gun training.

OTSUJI: And then where did you go from there?

NAMBA: Then, December came, I know war is coming, because I seen it, read the paper. Things bad. All this garrison troop in Shanghai, Philippines, Japanese soldiers, American soldiers, Navy they fighting, killing each other.

OTSUJI: Did you know Pearl Harbor was going to get bombed?

NAMBA: Pearl Harbor? I know, not only Pearl Harbor. I thought it was Japan was going to hit Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles and San Diego. That is I know that because I was reading Japanese Nichi Bei, it's American newspaper. It is Japan [language], but American newspaper, and they going to attack all that base.

OTSUJI: That was in the Japanese paper?

NAMBA: Not Japanese paper. English Japanese paper in San Francisco. Japanese paper in America.

OTSUJI: Okay. I mean, what were they writing?

NAMBA: Huh? Japanese writing and then someone translate to American English.

OTSUJI: So, was it someone's opinion?

NAMBA: Yeah. Some opinion like all the Japanese becoming big shot [leader] in Japan Association or something like that. Pro-Japanese people, you know those guys. But, I mean probably they don't help physically, but you know, read it, and feeling that's all they could do. You buy the gun and ammunition, buy and send it to Japan like that wartime. You the enemy. Depends on what kind of answer they give them. Execution. Firing line.

OTSUJI: So, within the Japanese American community, there was a lot of discussion and debate?

NAMBA: Yeah. Lot of discussion ...

OTSUJI: Difference of opinion? Was there hostility?

NAMBA: Yeah... well, because lot of organization leader was pro-Japanese. Actually our place, well, good twenty Japanese, all issei people, when I got discharged and come back and I bought that place, you know, and no one was there, and standing on the sidewalk; they don't want to come in. Knock the door. "Hey! Namba. Come out!" They said, "Come on out!" I didn't go out to see who the hell out there. They're all pro-Japanese issei people.

OTSUJI: What did they want?

NAMBA: They want to ask me. He tell me, he says, "How can you face to Japanese

after the war is over?" And how come you don't came to change mind to Japan. You're kibei, is education in Japan; see, educate in Japan and how come you do that? I said, "I went to Japan, but, I didn't volunteer. Government ordered me to..., They knew already immigration officer and government, they get together document showing I returned from Japan, graduate school over there and came back. It's all black and white, I say. They say, "Show me." "So, you are Japanese, huh?" "Why, you went to war?" All the issei give me a bad time, see? You know, you guys did good job for you to show the hakujin big shot, you are all pro and rest of Japanese American here is also pro believe, you guys good. Some say that. You know, understand? But, some of them most of them, at least seventy five people was in my front yard and sidewalk. And those kind of guys, say, how can you can face the public? He say, in American people here and Japanese, pro-Japanese here, he say. Pro-Japanese people, I told them, I say, should go in jail or they should take to the firing range and then just execute everyone one of them, I told them that. "How can you do that? Stupid!" Issei people just like parents, you know? So, I was in between, but, somehow I made it out after that. Twice, middle of the night, the pistol, and about four, six, seven bullets were shot into the garage door after that. So, I know those guys did it, see?

OTSUJI: Good heavens!

NAMBA: I didn't tell you kids. Your Mommy told me, "Don't tell the kids, just keep it to yourself."

OTSUJI: So, how long did that go on?

NAMBA: Well, it's, nowadays, different I noticed, you know? That's why I go, before they staring at me, you know? So, I turn around the other way and then I say, "Hello. How is so and so?" Say how are you? He put head up and turn head around and act real funny. More recently, they quit that.

OTSUJI: You mean these people are still alive?

NAMBA: Still alive and those kind of guys, see, those kind of pro-Japanese, I could

report in as Japanese, they should pick them up put them in jail or either deportation. But, they, you know ...

OTSUJI: Well, I think Tulelake probably took care of that. Tulelake in the camps was a segregated camp, put all the pro-Japanese Americans.

NAMBA: See, so but don't say anything. Just keep it to yourself. Now, this is between you and I and your Mommy and I, but other than that ... Even Ed he make joke out of it, you know?

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: Same thing happen to him, too?

NAMBA: No, he's pro-Japanese. So, he's pro-Japanese. I don't know if he say so. He say, sometime, but, he three or four time come up and he say, "How can you face? You come back. You, you try to help Japanese and then, you know, Japan's information took to American devil. You gave it to them." I gave it, whether I wanted to or not, but what can I do? American soldier was behind me with a rifle or pistol. You think I could just run away or tell lie and wartime, and you, anytime, if you appeared to be pro-Japanese firing range, "ratatatat" [sound of gun firing]. That's the law. I seen it. It's written in the book.

OTSUJI: It was a very difficult time.

NAMBA: Oh, yeah. We went through all that. And then people don't appreciate I went through all that, so American Japanese, you know. Then, after returning, they tried to tell me I am stupid. "Yeah, you are a fool." "But you people should be in a jail. You're American citizens and think you're so big, how can you walk around sidewalk and meet the people? A lot of people here, there isn't anyone as foolish as you." Most of them pro-Japanese said they're Japanese, you know. So, I said, "Why don't you return to Japan?" "I'll return to Japan," he said.

OTSUJI: Were they in camp, too?

NAMBA: [scoffs]

- OTSUJI: Or was he in the Army?
- NAMBA: No, civilian. Issei people.
- OTSUJI: Oh, the isseis.
- NAMBA: And then the kibeis included in there.
- OTSUJI: Did the kibeis go to camp or they went into the army? Well, I guess a lot of them were in MIS, but ... did they all go?
- NAMBA: No, lot of nisei went to Japanese school here, right? Those kind of guys lot of pro-American.
- OTSUJI: They were pro-American? Because this was the only country they knew? So a lot of the kibeis refused to go into the Army?
- NAMBA: Lot of them.
- OTSUJI: So they ended up at Tule Lake?
- NAMBA: Right. Lot of them at Tule Lake and lot of them after .. almost war's end, those guys got picked up by FBI.
- OTSUJI: Lots of history.
- NAMBA: So, you know that's a human nature, you know what I mean? I mean race, some of American people tried to give bad time to Japanese here, you know, Japanese Americans and ... I don't know how many time that those guys call me you're pro-Japan, stupid. Lot of people call me. You're pro-Japanese dummy, you know. So, I told them, I said, so what! What's wrong with that? If you don't like it here, hurry and pack your bags and go home to Japan! I told them like that.
- OTSUJI: So are they still talking like that? Do they still talk the same way ... Fifty years later? Or did ...
- NAMBA: No. I told them off. That was ... those kind of guys kind of quiet down. They don't say no more to me. Before, I told them like that, he say, he tell me, "You look, return to Japan." Pro-Japanese. "Why should I go? You go home!" [laughs] "You're pro-Japanese. You go home. During wartime, where were you? Were you in camp and eating regular meals in civilian camps, living like

American citizens eating all kinds of food? While you were there, like a dummy, I did a lot in the Army.” I didn't say anything. I told, “I was going to do my American soldier's duty. Like an American does, I did it. Never turn against the US government. Actually, U.S. government was bad. Japanese soldiers went to China and they raid all China. Woman rape, women and kids, daughters. I was just stayed silent about Japan's matters. You got to watch Americans, too. Talk to you nice in front, they stab you in back. Boy, American and Japanese do stabbing like that, but Americans are worse than Japanese boy, I tell you.

OTSUJI: Do you think that's just human nature?

NAMBA: Could be that's human nature. Human nature [exasperated sounds].

OTSUJI: Regardless of race?

NAMBA: Yeah. But, don't say anything. This thing is one I could trust, I could tell, but I won't tell nobody. My. . . safe. . . you know what I mean? So, even you, just think, but, don't say my father was pro-Japanese, don't say anything like that. I was . . . worked in Military Intelligence School. They tell me go. If I write it down, article of war, they got all this stuff in a book. He told me to read this when you got time. Read it and what you think about it. Give me your opinion, he said. Army officer, they don't trust me. I was there, but he don't trust me. See. So, you know this is order from war department. See? So, they doing behind the god damn [inaudible], they don't trust me, you know. But, I don't care. I don't get mad. I don't do this. “Yes, sir.” I just thinking, you know. I don't never turn it down or refuse because I feel that god damn get even son of a bitch I think to myself. Well, anyway ...

OTSUJI: Well, let's get back to something a little more action oriented. Let's just go back to when you were starting your translation services in the MIS [Military Intelligence Service]. Did you go to Australia first?

NAMBA: Australia? Yeah.

OTSUJI: And what did you do there? And how long did you stay there?

NAMBA: Well, first I left Hamilton Field, went on TWA, and so from Minneapolis, Minnesota to San Francisco. I was, at that time, I was on first airplane, American airplane ride, you know. And then I stayed there and they give us all this rifle, bayonet, uniform clothing, fatigue clothing. All this, issue to us. Then we stay there, waiting for transportation. It [the plane] was waiting for American... passenger, but they were busy, some carry soldier to South Sea island or something. They did no more, but we have to leave. TWA. American government ordered TWA to pull in. So, we get into TWA and head or higher up in the war department ordered to go overseas right away. They got something, important thing, arise. So, we wait until airplane arrives. Hell, they ammunition carrier. All that bomb. Airplane bombs. Both sides is a bomb racks. Ammunition racks. They're all the real ammunition. Our eyes opened! And then, so in those days you can't go up higher than 10,000 feet, see, they explained. The co-pilots door was closed, then guard with a machine gun, small machine gun in back and in front, all watching. Fifteen Japanese, and I was one of them.

OTSUJI: Japanese American GIs?

NAMBA: Yeah. American GI. No insulation, see. This is actually to carry all the freight and ammunition. See. So, ammunition, 10,000 feet, in those days ... Today's you go up to 20,000, but 10,000 feet, that was as high as you could go up, this pilot explained. And then Hamilton Field in San Francisco we got on bomber. We arrived in Hawaii. My girl friend gave me instructions. If you see Hawaii stop by and just say "hello." You use telephone and call. The phone number is right here. Lot of Hawaiians evacuating back to mainland, see. And then, when I telephone, she didn't know my name, the person "Namba." I said, "Kikuno Hashimoto is my girl friend." "Oh, is that so?" he said. "All Japanese, Hawaiian Japanese, evacuate. I heard about it. Is this true? I was already before the war and worked for an airplane company and I was an electronic specialist. All the airplane went to

troubles on the wires burn up or something, has to be replaced. Work at Hawaii's Honolulu airport, American airport. Everyone evacuated my family, myself, government. Sometimes you have to report to work everyday," he say. So I was lucky. Then that night, he came over and "I want to invite you for dinner. Maybe this is last dinner for you guys." So, he said, "How about, you know, drink some sake [rice wine] and go." He was nice.

OTSUJI: Do you remember his name?

NAMBA: So then, my mother-in-law, I think, relationship. So, I went. I told myself I am very sorry. I said I bring all the gang here. By myself, I don't know where the hell your place is, so I got lost. So, I said, I don't want to go by myself and felt that kind of danger by myself. Japanese soldier I said, lot of hakujin people, even newspaper publishing "Japs" and "American Japs wearing American Uniforms" he said, you know. "So, you know, I don't want to die. I want to die clean and on battlefield," I said. See? [laughs] So, anyway, you ought to see all the gochiso [feast] and total all fifteen, including myself, fifteen soldiers over there. All were nice.⁶ I told--wrote a letter--you know. I did not get letter...they don't ... any strange name, they ...

OTSUJI: Censored it?

NAMBA: Yeah. They censored it. They burn it or return it, see? Real strict. So, anyway. Lot of people, half drunk you know, forget about kind of sadness.

NAMBA: Laughing, giggling, you know what I mean? I never forget that. I come back and told your mother and she said, "That was stupid. It was an imposition." I didn't mean to. I turned it down. But, when I come home from war zone, then you can celebrate for me. And then, you know, right now, you don't know, never know; even from enemy troops lot of nisei soldiers get

⁶ Party hosted by Kikuno Hashimoto's cousins: Teruyo Hayashi, husband Harold Hayashi, cousin Eddie Yamamoto's sister, cousin Eddie, cousin Charles Kawado, cousin Shigeru Muraoka. All these relatives from Hawaii helped on the Hashimoto family farm on Bradshaw Road, Sacramento, CA, from 1935 to 1940. They were close friends as well as cousins. It was a generous, memorable, and heart warming send-off for a group of very apprehensive young American GIs who didn't know if they would come back. (Comment added by Kikuno Patricia Hashimoto Namba.)

shot by the, see, American soldier. Middle of the night, got air raid, so, we has to go in foxhole and dig in the rock. And then they give a signal. A siren. So, you get back in the dugout. See. In the rocks, big rock. Put coconut tree stems down and on top of that you put rocks, see? I got in that place. This young guard, "You are Japs!" he say. "Throw all the pistols and rifles and raise your hand!" I said, "What the hell you talking about?" I told him, "I am American citizen! American soldier just like you! What the hell you trying to do?" I said, "No. You are Japs!" He had a rifle in [my] back. He talked to me. He said, "You come report to headquarters." "Okay. I'll go. I went in there. He called Colonel White. He was full Colonel. Eagles on shoulder. He was G2 intelligence section. He is in charge so he says, "Sergeant Namba, what's going on here?" "Well, he thinks I am an enemy and he got rifle behind me and just pick me up and he almost pull the trigger on me!" And I told him, I said "Wait. Before I die I want to see Colonel White!" which I am talking to him. "I want to see Colonel White, and he said, "Okay, give me the rifle!" He took rifle and give it and then call, dial in, and he is in ... belong to the company and he brings his commanding lieutenant came. Then he comes. "Take the rifle away and confine him until tomorrow morning," he say. "I'll be out here." And then, the Colonel told me, he say, "Namba, I am sorry." he say. "I didn't explain everybody so they thinking still enemy, but you are not. You are American. And I will make an announcement tomorrow morning." Loudspeaker, company gathered. They announced and I was in. And then ... "Okay, you raise your hand and tell them how "you know that [laughs] ... I was on the platform, top of the... , you know how ... Colonel White introduced [me] to everybody. And then, after that, I had no problem. See? But, I almost got shot!

OTSUJI: So at that time there were only you and the fifteen others that went over there?

NAMBA: Fifteen others, everyone was introduced ...

OTSUJI: You were the first one ... ?

NAMBA: ... introduced. I was the first one ... I got caught behind and guard already almost pulled trigger. They had to take it off on safety and put it in the "Why do this?" If I make the wrong move , he liable to pull the trigger. I'd be gone. [laughs]

OTSUJI: That was in Australia?

NAMBA: No. No Australia ...

OTSUJI: We left Australia?

NAMBA: No. Forget about ...see? Report to MacArthur ... General MacArthur no office ...

OTSUJI: ... in Australia? ...

NAMBA: In Australia.

OTSUJI: Melbourne?

NAMBA: Brisbane, yeah. Brisbane, Australia. Melbourne is above that, big city. Brisbane, Australia. That is headquarters. General MacArthur escaped from Philippines to Australia escaped .

OTSUJI: So he stayed there until the end of the war?

NAMBA: Who?

OTSUJI: MacArthur?

NAMBA: No. MacArthur, from then Japan start losing. The United States sent lot of division, lot of people in. And Japan is losing, and all start backing out. There almost Japanese soldier was in... they had one company, Japanese soldier in Australia. From New Guinea island there is straits and he pass that and went to Australia. And, all those guys got captured. All the Japanese in American stockade. And then, see, we were making a landing. I never forget this storm. You talking about the storm? ...

OTSUJI: You are talking about Guadalcanal?

NAMBA: Yeah. It was Guadalcanal, on this side. On the map, I'll show you. New Britain Island. That is Japanese supply headquarters and from there in between Rock Island. The Marine detached we going to capture two

companies was over there, Japanese companies, radio station. And very important message. We captured Japan's soldiers, surrender. And then we went to see a sad case. Man, nighttime, tears come out, you know. I say, "Why Japan never surrender?" At that time, they had no ammunition, no food, no medicine, see? And then they should... soldiers some of them, bodies shook, all the dead were blue, white. Malaria. They had malaria. If it's malaria then we had to talk to them. We waited to interrogate them until we got someone from the medical unit, you know. I told him, I said, "Colonel White, you know, he knows a lot of things. If you want get information, how about send medicals and give him a shot, so malaria fever would kind of be held down. So, I gave him a shot. "Good idea", he telephoned soon. About two doctor's helpers came and gave an injection. Then they gave some water, and medicine, soda. Stop starvation, see? And then give him food. When that finished, you know, we can get information. "How many troops in this island? And how is the supply? Food? Clothing? And medicine? So, take care of it, please." "I don't know exactly," he say. Soldier was skin and bone and then start shaking and then actually soldier he was around I'd say at least thirty five, he cry, you know. He feels sorry. "I'd rather die. I like to die," they say. "I lost all the rifles, pistols. It's all lost." There's no ammunition, food, medicine. Bombed, see? Japanese have no support any more. Navy ships, big ship were sunk. See?

OTSUJI: They were actually stranded on that island? There was no escape for them? Those Japanese soldiers?

NAMBA: Japanese soldiers couldn't get away because you have to have a boat. See?

OTSUJI: So, how long were they stuck on the island?

NAMBA: Oh, first there was the air raid. Lot of air raid in the middle of the night and early in the morning about 2:00 or 3:00 o'clock, up to 4:00 o'clock. Japanese airplane came and strafed. You can't put no light, could not even cook.. You can see it was pitch dark. You turn even candle and you can see it a mile away.

They gave us instruction, see? Never you should turn light on, candle, or flashlight, or no light, he say.

OTSUJI: So, the Japanese airplanes were bombing the islands? Didn't they know their own soldiers were on the island?

NAMBA: Soldiers on there, but they lost communication. So, the communication station was bombed. It was the primary target of the Americans. They sent messages, so it was bombed first. Six or eight airplanes came after we made the landing. About week or two week later...

End Tape 3, Side 1

SESSION III to be continued

SESSION III (continued)

South Lake Tahoe, California

Begin Tape 3, Side 2, September 1, 1997

OTSUJI: This is Tape 3, Side 2. Eileen Otsuji continuing to interview Mr. Minoru Namba, September 1, 1997. Okay, you can continue. Do you remember where you were?

NAMBA: Yeah. We made a landing at Woodlock Island. And ...

OTSUJI: What was the name of that island?

NAMBA: W-o-o-d

OTSUJI: L-o-c-k? W-o-o-d l-o-c-k?

NAMBA: Yeah, Woodlock. Yeah, you are right. And that was Marine Corps one battalion. And main purpose of landing is capture the airstrip, Japanese airstrip. Japanese Army's airstrip. And then, wants to fix it, modify it, as a landing strip. And that was the Marine Corps' mission. So, when mission was completed I got reassigned to South Seas Island. We passed the New Britain Island and that's the Japanese's biggest supply base. And we'll keep that one. I don't know what reason. Maybe just airplane bombing control. And then we were assigned to Marine Corps, that was first Marine Corps division assigned. And we went to the Goodenough Island, attached to First Cavalry Division. And about, about 3:00 o'clock in the morning, pitch dark, we had all the military convoy and airplane, fighter, American fighter plane support and then made the landing. It was raining and pitch dark. We got out. I was one of the first ones on the net, so I jumped off from the net. The waves were up, barge here and little personnel barge, you know. When we reached the beach the front end open and then soldiers they got into the water. But, anyway, when we got out of the barge, then the Japanese soldier, they open up you ought to see in the water. They got order to don't fire single shot. Don't hold it. And then made a landing and of course, opened up and then

you ought to see the "pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa" [gun fire sound] gun, cannon noise and machine gun "ka-ka-ka-ka-ka-ka." Man, until that time, I never see so many American die after about up to 3:30 to 4:00 o'clock in the morning. Start light coming in, you know. Oh, man, GIs. I was lucky. God damn. The water came up to here.

OTSUJI: How high? Up to your thigh? Up to your pockets?

NAMBA: Yeah. All the water landing barge personnel, ammunition, food, canned goods, we have to unload first, you know. I had all the documents. All the different documents and dictionary and so, I got an excuse, I don't have to do that like other soldiers. Other soldiers. Manual soldiers. So, then machine gun was bullets flying. And then, it was a machine gun company, they, the United States soldier, company's machine gun set "bara-ta-ta-ta-ta arghhhhhhhh" holes. Not only one machine gun. But, hell, at least fifteen to twenty machine guns, U.S. company, machine gun company, see? Boy, in the morning, when it was nighttime, early in morning, pitch dark, and don't know where . . . who died or anything until the sun come out. Oh man, you ought to see the dead bodies. Americans' dead bodies and Japanese dead bodies just all over. And then an American soldier, "I was lucky," he say. "You're interpreter and translator, so if I find a document you going to translate. Let us know." "Okay, I'll do that." Shit. Man. To the hakujin, I said, "Look, latest message all captured document. Hell, who the hell wants two months later, three months after the battle's over, or either . . . nothing, but dead, all the soldiers starving, and they want to get more rationing. They asking for that. So, I tell those guys and in...

"Okaeri." [The family returns and Mr. Namba welcomes them.]

[Tape recorder turned off]

END SESSION III

SESSION IV

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Continue Tape 3, Side 2, January 11, 1998

OTSUJI: This is January 11, 1997 [1998]. This is Eileen Otsuji interviewer for Mr. Minoru Namba, my father. We are in Sacramento at 4525 Euclid Avenue, Sacramento, California 95822. This is the home of Mr. Namba. Good morning. How are you?

NAMBA: Stop! [Chuckling]

OTSUJI: Well, can you answer questions? How are you? That's easy.

NAMBA: I'm fine.

OTSUJI: Are you feeling a little shy this morning?

NAMBA: Yes.

OTSUJI: Why? We just got through Christmas and New Years and had a whole bunch of friends. . .

NAMBA: I don't want to make public in any statement. They exaggerate it or if they took it nice way, fine, but they, you know, still lot of pro-Japanese and those kind of guys may criticize, so I don't want to make any statement. That's why I don't want it this kind of thing in public.

OTSUJI: Well, tell me what you mean by pro-Japanese? Who are the pro-Japanese and what do they think?

NAMBA: Well, pro-Japanese you could see, lot of kibeis and lot of still young issei still living here and then they all pro-Japanese and then I'm helping in Am....

OTSUJI: I don't understand what you mean by pro-Japanese.

NAMBA: Civilian here is still love Japan.

OTSUJI: In what way?

NAMBA: They love Japan and they lot of pro-Japanese and if I make statement they... I am making enemy.

OTSUJI: What kind of statements would they find objectionable?

NAMBA: I think I did my duty as American citizen and lot of people, civilian people here didn't like it. I went out and found documents and found enemy document. I translate it and I present and all that. I shouldn't say that because lot of pro-Japanese people, older people, are still here, yet, and they won't like it. If they heard something like that and I'm making enemy. Then I have a few time they threaten me. Try to kill me and "you are pro-Japanese", and you "no good" so I don't want to make actually I don't want to make statement. Lot of pro-Japanese here. So they liable to shot me. I don't care. If I die, fine. I mean it's okay. But, just the idea they shot me.

OTSUJI: So, are you saying that they are still believing that you were disloyal to Japan during World War II because you were in the MIS? Because you were raised in Japan, they think that you should have been loyal to the Emperor and to Japan?

NAMBA: Emperor, yeah. But I didn't because, I didn't, I don't want... I'm going to make a living here in United States, and I want to be not Japanese, pro-Japanese. I want to be good American.

OTSUJI: And I think that's definitely been true. Right? What year did you come here? What year did you come to the United States?

NAMBA: 1920... 1927.

OTSUJI: So this is 70, actually 71 years. So you have been a loyal citizen ever since you came. Actually, you were born here.

NAMBA: Yeah. I born here [Sacramento County]. Yeah, eight years old, my mother and father send me back [to Japan] to educate.

OTSUJI: I think we got that in the earlier part of the tape. Tell me more about the pro-Japanese sentiment today. So, the kibeis and the others were born in Japan and who now live here. Do they still talk about disloyalty to you?

NAMBA: Well, I can't tell you that if true because... only time I hear is at gardeners' meeting, most of them kibei and they were talking. And I step right in there because I didn't miss going that crowd. But, I had to go through to repair my

lawn mower. I went through and they all talking about me, and I walk in. Everybody stop, look at me, and some of them stand up and ready to slug me. But, I didn't stop. Just walk right through. But, they were talking about me that I'm kibei and some of them say I want to kill me. [laugh] I heard it.

OTSUJI: Why?

NAMBA: They . . . I was pro-Americans.

OTSUJI: But, how many in that group were MIS?

NAMBA: MIS? That's all the gardeners. So, some of them, most of them, they turn it down to join in the Army. They want to stay in as civilian.

OTSUJI: So, they had a choice. Join the Army or stay in camp. They had a choice?

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: And so they stayed in camp. Which camp did they go to? Do you know?

NAMBA: Well, there's... ah, I don't know. What camp you could ask your mother.

OTSUJI: Probably Tule Lake since that's where most of the pro-Japanese people went.

NAMBA: Tule Lake is just temporary. All California people, you know went over there.

OTSUJI: Well, I think initially, but later on during the war they segregated it and Tule Lake had the pro-Japanese people there.

NAMBA: Yeah. Pro-Japanese, yeah...

OTSUJI: ... and Japan, too. So that was a very difficult place to be.

NAMBA: All right. But, that's why I want to stay out. I don't want to make any statement. Still lot of issei people and kibei people still here, yet. So, if they heard something what I made a statement they'll probably shoot me or throw dynamite in my house. [laughs]

OTSUJI: Well, I don't think they would do that because that's criminal. They won't do that. But, I think that's indicative of how strong the feelings were. What's interesting is. . . Do you think they still feel that strongly today? Or, have they mellowed out.

NAMBA: I recently. . . I am avoiding going out to meeting or any... I want to stay out because they think I am criminal, pro-American and get captured document

and message and I translated and I presented it to the United States' counter-intelligence Corps. So, they don't like that, but I didn't tell all those people what I did, you know, overseas. Because United States Army officers, they... "when you go out for you safe, don't say any unnecessary. If they ask questions, you shouldn't tell them I translated document. I interrogate prisoner of war. So, don't say anything," he say. I just served in the US Army.

OTSUJI: Well, that's because that was the military intelligence operation. But, it is okay to talk about it now. They lifted those restrictions. And they are even writing books about MIS.

NAMBA: Well, I don't want to make statement. Any statement liable to get me...

OTSUJI: Oh, I don't think so.

NAMBA: Because they told me. Look how many guy told me. He say, "I'll get you sooner or later," he say. He just, they hates me, pro-Japanese then, hell. Well, I can't help it. I don't want to...

OTSUJI: But, that was...

NAMBA: I want to do my duty. Duty.

OTSUJI: ... was that in 1946? Was that in 1950 they said that? Or did they say that in 1997?

NAMBA: Well, '97. It because... any, something like that. I don't want to participate. So, I don't go that Japanese, lot of big meetings.

OTSUJI: So, you think that if there is a lot of Japanese there then the subject will come up?

NAMBA: They, well, see the Japanese, you can't blame them, pro-Japanese. They don't say, but they all pro-Japanese, you know. But, Army, they give me a choice. You want to go to gas chamber or you don't want to be a American citizen. You want to be pro-Japanese? He give me all the choice, so I say, "No, I don't want to be pro. I am born and raised here until eight years old. An then eight years old, my parents forced me to go back to Japan and study Japanese. He

said, "You're Japanese, I don't care what," he say. Japanese is Japanese. So, they won't. . . American people, they don't like it. Well, I believe that. Race is different, see? So anyway, I was lot of things. I got mixed up. I don't know which way I'm going to be--United States citizen or Japanese American, but start thinking. Well, you know something, I went through. Raise my right hand to do my best. I came to see the United States government, because I want to be stay here. I don't want to go back Japan. That's what I made up when I came up or return to United States.

OTSUJI: So, did you ever have the opportunity to go back to Japan?

NAMBA: I had opportunity to go back but, I turned it down. I said I am going, I'm going to be American citizen. I am going to stay in America.

OTSUJI: So, who asked you to come back? Who asked you to go back to Japan?

NAMBA: That time, I don't know... my uncle. My uncle, was way up there. He was a government official and then he also belonged to Japanese some kind of secret service. So, they probably don't like it. They maybe he don't shoot, but maybe he tell those people they liable to kill me and rid of me, I think, yeah. So, I was in a tough position, I tell you. There are a lot of people curious. He say, "You're raised in Japan and you got educated in Japan. He say, "How come you don't help Japan? I say, "I'm not going to help. When I left Japan, and this is my thinking, I was going to be either Japanese, do the work for Japanese government or United States government. I made up my mind I'm American citizen. I'm going to stay in America. And I'll do the best I can as American citizen," I told him.

OTSUJI: So, did anybody help you make that decision?

NAMBA: Nobody. I had to make my own. The give us... give me a choice, you know, see? If you want to go help Japan you could go, American white people tell me, you could go back. Your choice. So I said, "No, I'm not going back Japan." Because I seen it and compared to everything and all that economy, I looked at it. Japan's economy and all that. Japanese, you can't beat America,

because I compared with all the military equipment like gun, machine guns and all that. And in Japan using still horse, horse and cow for pulling buggies and all that. You know, United States, jeep and weapon carrier and all that way advanced. And then, Japan made mistake to attack United States. They should have sit down and talk it over. Make peace, but that time civilian wants to get peace, but military, you know how military, you want to fight the United States. Well, that's what they teaching in Army for. You know, any attack or start criticizing Japanese Army or something or they get mad, and they try to hit United States. But they mistake. I thought lot--you war with United States, you got no chance, because Japan don't. . . first place, all the iron and land is small and overpopulated. They don't have no birth control. So, all the people got no place to go. See the United States got lot of land left over and they could develop it, and raise vegetables or fruits or whatever. You got all kind of land where Japan was limited.

OTSUJI: So, during this part, you know, where everybody was afraid that World War II was going to start, were you writing letter to Japan to Yoshino [sister] or to your grandmother and grandfather?

NAMBA: No.

OTSUJI: So, you had no idea what they were thinking?

NAMBA: That's right.

OTSUJI: No telephone calls?

NAMBA: No.

OTSUJI: Did anybody call Japan in those days?

NAMBA: Well, see, if I writing Japan... just before Pearl Harbor, I wrote a letter to my sister, Yoshino. And they stopped it. They kept it. FBI they bring letter and say, "What you writing to Japan?" and all that. So, well, "that's my sister." "You know anybody belong to military Japanese Army?" I said, "No, I don't." "I came back at age of fifteen, fifteen years old, I came back. I finished school and I came back and they [the U.S. Army] need, they drafted

me, and they need me.” He say, “You got education in Japan and we want see the Japanese. Read in Japanese.” he say. And also “you could translate so we need someone like you. But, are you planning to go back Japan?” I said, “No.” He say, “So can I just swear.” I raise my hand, and you trust me [laughs]. I said, “I am not going back to Japan. I am going to stay United States as American citizen.” So, that’s why I don’t want to make any statement something like this. Some still, you never know, what kind of crazy people still here, yet.

OTSUJI: The world’s full of crazy people.

NAMBA: Yeah. They liable to come in and throw in a... you ought to see when I bought this place.

OTSUJI: This is this house on Euclid Avenue?

NAMBA: All the issei and some of kibei was in there. They come over, start hollering, to come out. And they want to take me to someplace else. So, I said, “No.” I said, “I’m not leaving.” You know if I go over there you beat the hell out of me or either some guy pull the pistol and kill me.

OTSUJI: What year was that?

NAMBA: That was when I bought this place... no front lawn, no lawn, nothing in there. So, that was 19-- when I bought this house? I could ask your mother. Mommy.

OTSUJI: 1950?

NAMBA: Yeah. I bought that... all that American and issei people and kibei come over here, whole bunch of them

OTSUJI: What did they want? Just to talk?

NAMBA: Talk, but he wants to beat the hell out of me, I think. They want to go out and they say you get on a.... I said, “No, I am not going to get on.”

OTSUJI: So, how did you... oh, that was from the gardeners? They were mad because you were talking to them over at the lawn mower repair shop? The Gardeners’ Association?

NAMBA: Yeah. Yeah.

OTSUJI: What year did we move here? [Mother provides the answer] So, we bought the house in 1958.

NAMBA: 1958? Yeah, okay.

OTSUJI: May of 1958. And so, the war was over in 1946. So, for twelve...

NAMBA: Something like that.

OTSUJI: ... people were still arguing? For twelve years, people were still talking about all their hard feelings over the war?

NAMBA: Well, some of them, not all of it. See?

OTSUJI: I would be tempted to ask who they are.

NAMBA: You ought to see it when my lawn mower broke down. I was cutting, you know. I don't have money so buy the cheapest one I bought, and it broke down. And they were meeting, all gardener meeting. Some of them, whole bunch, I'll say how much was it about, thirty or forty almost people there. And they, some kind of meeting they doing. I walk right in. Because lawn mower, I went in there. And I happen to be there. You got a meeting going on. And then everybody when I walk in, try to hit me, some of them stand up, with fists ready to beat me, I think. So, I say... some people holler. He say, "We want to talk to you, so you stay here." I talked to them. "No, no thank you. I got work to do." So, I went out and some of them they stopped, see? They think I am going to report to the FBI or either some.... So they stopped. When they, if I wrote FBI something like this and then they beat me up. All those guys would going to go either sent it back to Japan if they pro-Japanese. See?

OTSUJI: Absolutely. So, were these kibeis American citizens? I guess kibei is an American citizen because they were born here. I answered my own question.

NAMBA: Just like me, see? They born here, and they went back to Japan. Parents believed in Japanese education. My mother and father both of them say, "You no matter what, you are Japanese. You are not American, white, white

American. You are Japanese.”

OTSUJI: Your mother said that? Who said that?

NAMBA: I didn't say that. Those guys said...

OTSUJI: Oh, those guys did. Okay. So, were there any kibei that thought like you did?

NAMBA: Those kind of kibei, lot of pro-Japanese.

OTSUJI: No. But, where were the kibeis that were “loyal Americans,” the MIS kibeis? Did you know them?

NAMBA: Well, see, some of them just like me. Some of them, they don't want be. . . they born and raised here. Just went back to get education and came back. When I came back, I saw own eyes Japan's economy and United States economy. No comparison. Why did Japan attack? That's wrong. You can't win!

OTSUJI: But, the question asked was, “Were there kibeis who were thinking like you, who could think the same way as you? You talked about the pro-Japanese kibei. Were there pro-American kibeis? So, who are they?

NAMBA: Ah, I forgot name.

OTSUJI: In Sacramento?

NAMBA: Sacramento, yeah.

OTSUJI: Who were the ones that you could talk to?

NAMBA: That's why I never talk about the war, because you don't know this guy taking, he is for Japanese or American, or not, you know?

OTSUJI: Who are your friends? who are your kibei friends?

NAMBA: Oh, Jack Tsuchida.

OTSUJI: That's one. I guess I remember...

NAMBA: Yeah, Jack Tsuchida also went to Military Intelligence School like me. Jack is kibei. And who's that? Jimmy Tsumura. Jimmy Tsumura, he is dead. Already gone.

OTSUJI: So, are these... Jack and Jimmy are from Sacramento?

NAMBA: Yeah, and Hiroshi Tanabe, too. Sacramento. He is kibei just like me.

- OTSUJI: So, how did they feel about the pro-Japanese gardeners? Was Jack a gardener?
- NAMBA: No.
- OTSUJI: Was Hiroshi a gardener?
- NAMBA: Hiroshi Tanabe? No.
- OTSUJI: Was Jimmy Tsumura a gardener? So, Jimmy was not.
- NAMBA: He's pro. But he's a Japanese lover. Japanese [laughs] you know.
- OTSUJI: Well, did you get into arguments with him?
- NAMBA: Yeah. No. Jimmy Tsumura is ... his brother passed away. Brother was kibei. but Jimmy Tsumura was just like your mother.
- OTSUJI: Nisei.
- NAMBA: Nisei. He went to Japanese School here. He could speak Japanese.
- OTSUJI: But, Hiroshi and Jack are kibeis?
- NAMBA: Yeah. Jack is kibei and Hiroshi Tanabe is kibei.
- OTSUJI: But, they were not gardeners?
- NAMBA: No.
- OTSUJI: So, do you think that they were able to avoid the conversations with the gardeners you had? Or did they also get into arguments with the gardeners?
- NAMBA: Well, that I couldn't tell you. Lot of kibei just like me, they went to study Japanese and then came back. Okay, but they don't discuss it. They smart. You know, inside maybe to themselves, I tell you. Japanese is Japanese. You know what I mean? White man, you be surprised. My big argument, I'm talking through experience in the Army. They beat the Japanese [military] trying to beat hakujin. All hakujin get together and, ah, almost kill the Japanese soldiers.
- OTSUJI: Where?
- NAMBA: Well, lot of place. You have a division... division consists of about 40,000 soldiers. And Japanese, they got small portion here and there, little bit. You should put too many Japanese, they get power so American get scared. So

they want to put, you know, put here...

OTSUJI: Break them up in small units.

NAMBA: In small units. See? So, this is between you and I. The war was horrible. I never want to see it again. I tell you. Boy, hakujin, of course, mad so you cannot help them. But, all the prisoner of war, helpless, and then, all skin and bone because food on the way, they attacked by the United States Air Force. And then were strafed. See? Food and medicine. No medicine so lot of them get sick.

OTSUJI: How many of the POWs did you see or did you talk to? How many POWs did you talk to? Interrogate?

NAMBA: Oh, interrogate. Some of... lot of them. The company consist about 120, 140, 140 soldiers. But you know, when you get captured almost ready, all ready to die. They all malaria, sick. Some of them interrogating... just fell down. I said, "What the hell?" Then some of them hands cold, so he died. And some of them, they faint and he come up. But, they all captured prisoners they want to die. They say, "You can't face in public". He say, "Capture, Japan teach you," and they fight until die.

OTSUJI: So, do you think they would have committed hara kiri had they had the opportunity?

NAMBA: Well, yeah.

OTSUJI: How old were these Japanese soldiers? What was the youngest age?

NAMBA: You don't see old one. Age about around, I'll say, everyone of them over 21 and some of them, of course, 30, 35.

OTSUJI: And so, they didn't have teenagers. They were all 21 years or older? The Japanese soldiers were 21 years old at the youngest?

NAMBA: Yeah. You don't get no 18 or 19. I think older than 21.

OTSUJI: So, did they have families?

NAMBA: No, no . . . families.

OTSUJI: They were all bachelor soldiers?

- NAMBA: They were all bachelor. And, wife and kids staying home.
- OTSUJI: No, that's what I mean... the soldiers were married with children?
- NAMBA: So, that's why bad. That's why war, I can't understand why Japan fought United States. This is all politician, you know. United States, you can't win United States. United States got all kind of natural resources. Japan starving to death. See?
- OTSUJI: Who were some of the more interesting Japanese soldiers that you interrogated? Or, that you interpreted for?
- NAMBA: Japanese?
- OTSUJI: The prisoners. Were there some officers? Did you interrogate some...
- NAMBA: Oh, yeah, officers, officers and civilian both. Of course, officers got more information, you know.
- OTSUJI: So, what kind of information did you get and who were they? Start with the most interesting... the highest ranking Japanese officer you can think...
- NAMBA: High ranking Japanese, why I ... I mean, lot of captain, was lot of you know, pretty high ranking officer... captain. And lot of them they don't have no... something... I could tell by the... see, they say they got war. They don't want to show the rank because ranking they knew all what's going on so they want United States to give me all the listing. They should see any officer wants to interrogate him first. See? So, buck private and first class private, corporal and sergeant don't mean nothing. Officer have authority to do this, they have to follow through, otherwise during wartime, "shaaats [shooting sound], the shots.
- OTSUJI: So who was the highest ranking officer? And what did you talk about?
- NAMBA: I talked to the, in the Philippines, I talked to... what the hell his name? He was a... he was a real high ranking general. He had a Japanese body guard, and he looked like, dressed like native Filipino and, that time that general was captured. They captured him. And they bring him over and he say, they want to interrogate. Me and a Chinese guy, he is a officer. I was a just a sergeant.

And he was a general, so he know a lot of stuff. And then he sent it to, I think, MacArthur's office. But, they didn't send me. "I want you to get lot of experience in a front line and so, I want you to stay interpreter." "Oh, okay, I'll stay. You are the captain." But, I like sometime get mentally exhaust. I don't, I don't sleep enough sleep. So, I sometime I get kind of... feel like I'm... oh, in a [inaudible] you know... so anyway, but, they kept me all on the front line. But, Japanese they all the... captured. When they were interrogated, "All the boat got sinked coming from Japan, so someplace in New Guinea," he say. And they got ship sunk by the bomb... by the American bombers and all the food, medicines and clothing, they don't reach destination. So, I asked, "Why Japan and they, how come they don't surrender. You not going to win. Why? Why?" "Well, that's all the high ranking officers' idea. They want to fight it until die." But I told them, I told soldiers, "Why they start war? Why United States got everything. It is a big country. They have enough food and all enough medicine and enough clothing."

OTSUJI: So, what was the soldier's response. Why did the soldier say Japan started the war?

NAMBA: That I asked him. I asked him, "Why you start the war?" Well, Japan overpopulated. No place to go. And they started beginning the attack China, too. That's why they made mistake. China should get same race. "Why fight it?" I told lot of high ranking Japanese officer. And I told them, I said, "Why Japan attack Pearl Harbor? And, why make war. You can't win." He say, "Japan don't have natural resources. They all depend on foreign country for food and gasoline, and all the war materials. Depend on outside." United States don't. They produce own food and ammunition and everything here to send it off.

OTSUJI: So, did you get any military secrets? Did you learn any military secrets from your interrogation?

NAMBA: Well, some of actually, they everyone of them say I shouldn't tell you. He

say, all this military secret and I'm not supposed to tell you, he say. If I tell, they find that out... he, either you die right there or send it back and hard labor.

OTSUJI: So, what was the United States going to do with these POWs?

NAMBA: Well, they, they interrogate them.

OTSUJI: And then?

NAMBA: And then, then they got to keep in a... they all gathered place all fenced in and they get food. They did not kill, United States.

OTSUJI: Were they used as prisoner exchange?

NAMBA: Yeah. They used it some of it. But during, before Japan surrendered, they start exchanging. Before that, don't get enough medicine, enough food, United States hesi... soldiers hesitate to give to Japanese. War going on. Hatred, you see?

OTSUJI: So, it was dangerous for these Japanese.... It was dangerous for the Japanese soldiers to tell you the secrets because they could still go back, end up going back home... back to Japan.

NAMBA: Well, that's why some soldiers hesitate to talk... Japanese soldier. They want to give... they got order, just like the United States.

End Tape 3, Side 2

SESSION IV to be continued

SESSION IV (continued)

Begin Tape 4, Side 1, January 11, 1998

OTSUJI: This is Eileen Otsuji. We are continuing the oral history interview with Mr. Minoru Namba. This is January 11, 1998 and we are at his home in Sacramento. This is Tape 4, Side 1.

Okay, we were last talking about interviewing POWs [Prisoners of war], the Japanese POWs when you were in the MIS. [Military Intelligence Service] Now, I had asked you earlier who some of the more important POWs were and you told me that the higher ranking officers were the ones that had the more interesting stories to tell. So, what I'd like to do is to ask you about your interrogation of General Homma. Can you tell me about that one? Are you having difficulty remembering who he was?

NAMBA: Yeah, I remember him, talk to him, but ...

OTSUJI: What kinds of questions were you supposed to ask?

NAMBA: Well, first of all, ask questions, how many soldiers behind, left behind, and then how's the food, supply, food supply, and medicines and all that. But food. The Japanese soldier was real hungry, almost starving, lot of them dying by starvation, and the food supply come in and they didn't reach to their base, they all sunk or blow up transportation. The trucks and all that get blow up so never reach to destination, so Japanese soldier was hungry, real hungry, and skin and bone. Starving, and I feel kind of sorry for them. But...

OTSUJI: So, in particular, what did General Homma. . . how do you pronounce that, Homma?

NAMBA: General Homma.

OTSUJI: So, was he the general who was responsible for all these Japanese when they were captured?

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: So, what did he say?

NAMBA: When we capture, he didn't have no military uniform. He had regular all khaki pants and shirts.

OTSUJI: Where did he get that from?

NAMBA: Well, they get it from supply. Some of them, they buy from Filipinos, native Filipinos. Those people is also poor and hungry so, anything they could get money, they sell it to them.

OTSUJI: So, he was actually in disguise? General Homma was wearing clothes so that he wouldn't be identified?

NAMBA: That's right.

OTSUJI: So, how did he get captured?

NAMBA: Well, the Filipinos, a lot of them working for the Japanese soldiers, and the Filipinos very poor and they work for any money they could get.

OTSUJI: So, they turned him in?

NAMBA: They turned him in.

OTSUJI: So, how much do you think the United States Army paid for General Homma to be captured?

NAMBA: Actually, they not, just enough to buy food and clothing.

OTSUJI: So, they would just offer money until they got the answer they wanted, is that what happened? So, how much time did you spend with General Homma?

NAMBA: Well, General Homma. Well, we didn't actually, more or less limited, lot of people want to interrogate him. I didn't have too much to answer they, officers wrote it down, ask this, ask that, ask that, main thing they say, "How much strength, soldiers strength people, and next one, how much rationing they have for feed the soldiers, and how's medical supply." Medical supply was real short. They didn't have much so people dying by fever, high fever, and soldiers just, and then healthy ones just stay [inaudible] weeks. Of course, for all the Japanese soldiers was shortage on the food, so most of them skin and bone.

OTSUJI: Okay, so that part of it we've covered already, but I want some detail. I would

like some detail about your conversation with General Homma.

NAMBA: Well, my questions was just limited because they, our officers give me the list for the questions for General, and its limited, they want me to ask how's ammunition system, how much they have, and then how much people, soldiers, fighting soldiers, left in, how many left over. Then and then a lot of shortage on malaria and all the wounded, laying in they actually so dirty, unsanitary, they didn't wash it, they didn't take a bath for a long time, so, they start beginning to rotten. I never see the legs and arms they spotty, start beginning to rot, I ask him he say what kind of disease that? See, he say first get scratch, first get some get caught, but no medicine so they spread.

OTSUJI: So, what color was it? What color was the infection?

NAMBA: Color was kind of dark brownish, some bleeding, its little bit, look different. So dirty, they didn't have a chance to take a bath to wash up. They always running.

OTSUJI: So, was it black?

NAMBA: Well, it's dirty. It's yellow, but, it's dirty, but they don't have time to wash their hands. They always running, run away because...

OTSUJI: So, did you see any gangrene?

NAMBA: Gangrene, yeah. A lot of gangrene. They call it gangrene, while beginning to start hands or wherever, they get scratched, that's where poison gets into ...

OTSUJI: And the tissue starts dying?

NAMBA: Yeah, tissue starts dying, so..

OTSUJI: Starts turning black.

NAMBA: So, really, really, miserable I mean.

OTSUJI: I'm getting the feeling that you don't want to talk about General Homma or you want to talk about something else first?

NAMBA: Well, I have a ... question is limited. Time is limited. Lot of other officer wants to question him, so ...

OTSUJI: What did you learn from him in the limited time that you had with him?

- NAMBA: Well, first of all ask how's the rationing, food shortage, just..
- OTSUJI: Well, you asked him that, right?
- NAMBA: Yeah, I asked him that. He say food was really short and people, soldiers dying by starvation, and then they didn't get medicine so all this, they call it nickname for "jungle rot," you know they don't have a chance to take a bath and all that, so lot of what they call "jungle rot" already bleeding all the legs and hands, and ... It's a miserable sight.
- OTSUJI: So, how did the General. . .?
- NAMBA: General also, course they live, regular soldiers don't get medicine and other ration, but General, so they not getting to lower ranking officers, I mean people, they get the high officers get ... first...
- OTSUJI: So, what kind of orders did this General give? Orders, did he give to his soldiers? Before he was captured?
- NAMBA: Well, before capture, depend on the place. They have to fight until they die, or time to withdraw escape until certain area.
- OTSUJI: So, when you were talking to him, so those sound like those were standard military orders and directives. Did the General share any of his own personal philosophy with you?
- NAMBA: Well, General, he was running. He looked like it's a civilian, dressed like a civilian, nobody could recognize him.
- OTSUJI: How old was he?
- NAMBA: He was about, I'll say, he was about 50, 55, 57, he wasn't that old, but...
- OTSUJI: But older than you since you were only in your 20's.
- NAMBA: Yeah, older than me, then they got about four bodyguards, and ... they were all starving, just skin and bone. The supplies all cuts off, so as it's coming in, fast as it come in U.S. got more. It's bomber, air superiority is the United States is way top than Japan. So, Japan don't have a chance to survive. So, all they have to do daytime hiding, they cover and some shrubs, or tree or some dig the ditch and put little brushes on top of it and look like, but they, night

time all they order to withdraw, move out. So, nighttime was always running. But all the soldiers at that time was hungry and medicine not coming fast enough. So, they have malaria fevers and all kind of sickness and soldiers dying by that, and.... It was miserable. I don't want to see war again.

OTSUJI: Well, since you had the opportunity to interview the General, how would you describe his feelings about war at his age because he had been in the Japanese military for at least thirty years?

NAMBA: Well, he's also getting order from high ranking officer in Japan.

OTSUJI: That's right. That's right.

NAMBA: See, Tojo, General Tojo, and all the higher than him. He getting order from them whether he likes it or not, he got to follow through. He told me he say lot of things he disagreed with Tojo. I don't know whether he telling the truth or not, but he just disagreed with Tojo's order.

OTSUJI: And what kinds of things specifically did he disagree with? Do you remember?

NAMBA: Well, disagree partly with top of that, he say all the ration and medicine coming in such and such a boat, coming and so he ask for fighter planes to protect from the American fighter plane and bomber, but Japan didn't have enough oil. They got the small, one small pilot they, I interrogate him, he say, "We have enough to protect this, all this supply line by our fighter plane, but no gasoline, so they couldn't go up and intercept the United States' bombers. And that he was really, really regret. He say if they have enough what you call it?

OTSUJI: Gasoline?

NAMBA: Yeah, he didn't think Japan going to lose the war.

OTSUJI: So, where were they getting their gasoline from?

NAMBA: Come from Japan.

OTSUJI: But where did Japan get it? Does Japan have a lot of petroleum and oil? Russia?

- NAMBA: No, come from China, and then back east, Europe, no no no. That direction.
- OTSUJI: The Middle East?
- NAMBA: Yeah. So, anyway, I don't want to see war again. That's miserable, I tell you. People eat enough food, fine. You know, all healthy. Skin and bone, it's all. They say rice bowl, they give them one bowl rice a day. Can you live on that? And then young man, they have to do heavy work, they have to withdraw, they have to run like hell, then they can't leave any heavy equipment, like machine guns, bayonets and all that you have to carry that, when you withdraw so, it was miserable. I don't want to see no more war again like that.
- OTSUJI: So, as far as the General, you didn't get information. . . did you get into any personal conversation with him?
- NAMBA: No, I didn't have any time, time's limited for question. So, hakujin officer was sit right next to me and then he listening and taking shorthand or something. He questioned something, he's a taking it, and then he ask me, he say, "What did he say? What did he say?" So, I asked him, he take it and write it down
- OTSUJI: So what happened to the General? What was his fate?
- NAMBA: The general, well, he's in the stockade, jail you know, well a little bit better place, I mean not regular soldier, just like cat and dog sleeping, you know. But he gets cot, army cot, and then blankets and stuff like that, I saw that one. So, I think American treat officers real nicely. You know why? All working by psychological lines, feed him good, give him good treatment, therefore talk. If you make real miserable and mean to them, they won't talk, see. So, I thought American using good tactics.
- OTSUJI: What happened to him after the war? Were they tried as military...
- NAMBA: Military, they got a court. You know, they got a name for it?
- OTSUJI: Tribunal? Military tribunal or military court-martial or...
- NAMBA: Yeah, military court-martial or something.
- OTSUJI: Then what happened, he was put in prison in Japan? Was he imprisoned in

Japan? After MacArthur took over?

NAMBA: Yeah, Japan surrender, and then all the POW prisoner of war, they send it back. Soon as transportation available, they take it back, and unload it, come right back, and then unload more soldiers, and that time already, I was in already Shikoku Island. I was in before leave I...

OTSUJI: So that was the occupation?

NAMBA: Occupation yeah, Japan surrender. So anyway, I supposed to be go on, not 1st Cavalry, 24th division yeah, and then supposed to be going to Shikoku island, Sacramento's city exchange, sister city. What was it?

OTSUJI: Matsuyama.

NAMBA: Oh yeah, Matsuyama that prefecture we supposed to go over there. Matsuyama, and it was nice place but, we made the landing and I had yellow jaundice, so they kept me in a, not troop ship, they put me on Navy ship, Navy hospital ship. I was sleeping like an officer, like first class officer. I'm just enlisted man, you know. But, I was sleeping there, they say, "What kind of food you want?" Choice, you order it, they bring it dinnertime or lunchtime. They bring it, you know. I live like a king. Take a shower everyday, and then they give me clean underwear and nightgown.

OTSUJI: So, how long did you stay in the Philippines?

NAMBA: Oh, the Philippines, I was in the Admiralty Islands, that's in the middle of the ocean, with the 1st Cavalry division. We went in there and invaded the Admiralty Islands.

OTSUJI: So, how many months were you there?

NAMBA: Oh, probably, I was there about a month. One month, yeah, and about one month, and then they start talking about Japan's going to surrender, but we don't want to accept it, so we have to get everything ready. And why Japan want to surrender, but the United States won't accept it, because reason is, "You guys start war." That's what the officers come back, "Started war, Japan's asking for it, and we're going to give it to him," he says. So, I say,

"All right, I give up." [laughter]. I heard, I say, well just like a kid you know, if Japan surrender, why go over there and kill more soldiers? "Well, I don't know, that's the orders from higher ups, so I don't. . .you know all that. . . I can't do when they go over there and fight, I would have to go, can't turn it down he say. But turn it down, if done, any officer in charge or some he get court martialed, he's going to be in jail, wartime sometime real severe, maybe put him in firing line. Yeah anytime, you turn against the U.S. government, American soldiers kill own troops, or soldiers, they don't mind. So anyway...

OTSUJI: So, let me ask another question, there's a sword that you have? You have a sword from...where did that come from?

NAMBA: Yeah, that's from a Japanese soldier, enemy. Japanese soldier when they surrender still carry his family treasure, so he say, "We have to carry. I don't want to throw it away just because." So, he surrender, prisoner of war, but he wants to keep it. And some of them carrying it, still carrying it, you know.

OTSUJI: The U.S. military lets them keep their swords?

NAMBA: Yeah, he wants to keep them. So, some of them, depends on the United States commanding officer at that time. He say, "No, any pistol or sword, you have to turn it in. Or if they don't, just jerk it off from the enemy's hand," he said.

OTSUJI: But there was somebody who would let them keep it? Who was that, do you remember?

NAMBA: See, he don't want to lose that, he wants to keep it and he surrender and I want to keep this and I'm not going to use this for nobody for sword he say, I want to just take it back, he say, when I surrender. But some of you seen, sergeant, 20-30 people. Man's crying, what can I do? I was really feeling sorry for them, you know. I could see they are family treasures. Generation to generation, so he wants to keep it and take it back, but.... Little things make me . . . why, he surrender and he don't want to use it for nobody, so I told one soldier, "Why don't you let him keep it, give it to him?" "No, I can't. My company commander he wants to take all the sword or pistol, any firearm, just

take it off," he say.

OTSUJI: So, did they use those long swords as a weapon or did they just carry it for good luck?

NAMBA: Weapon. I brought it back. That's a sharp knife.

OTSUJI: Yes, it is. They actually were going to use it in combat?

NAMBA: Yeah, used it. "Carried it just in case it save my life," he say. So, he used that, but now he wants to. . . that order to turn it in, they can't carry it as prisoner of war, so some of them really sick. Don't want to give it away, family treasure he say, you know?

OTSUJI: How did you get this one?

NAMBA: This one here? He was officer in the stockade jail you know, all the barbed wire, so then he come to me he say, "Are you a interpreter or are you Japanese?" "Yes, I'm an American nihonjin [Japanese]." "Ah, that's good, you did well, you know," he say, "that's the way its supposed to be. You born and raised in America, you supposed to be, you do whatever the U.S. government tells you. You do a good job," he say. He actually understand. Some of them, you know, say "Bakayaro" [stupid being]. He say, "You're a Japanese. Do what Japanese do." What can I do. I'm American citizen..

OTSUJI: So, do you remember the name of the man, the officer who gave you that sword?

NAMBA: Well, I lost it.

OTSUJI: Where was he from? Where was he from, where was his home?

NAMBA: Well his home, see it's a funny thing, 24th division was in the Philippines, so I say, "Where you from?" He say "Shikoku, Shikoku island. Shikoku island." I say that's the sister city's island.

OTSUJI: But, we didn't have a sister city back then.

NAMBA: No, sister city didn't have but, he still. . . soldier still alive. Japanese soldier still alive and his address and identification. I saw it, he show me.

OTSUJI: So, you're saying you think he came from Shikoku, maybe Matsuyama.

- NAMBA: Yeah, Matsuyama maybe. But on Shikoku, they have a infantry division, Japanese infantry division was in there, see?
- OTSUJI: I think that's where they made the Japanese Zero airplanes. They used to make the Japanese airplanes in Matsuyama or close by. The Zeros, the . . . Japanese Zeros. I think we saw that when we went to visit [1984].
- NAMBA: You know, you have this B-24 bomber, morning time, 5:00 o'clock in the morning, whaaaaaaaah [engine noise], they start, everyone wake up, you know, and then they take off, one by one taking off, every 10 minutes. And then they go out about around 6:00 o'clock start one didn't get shot, all they get shot down you know and then they usually gets home safe or already got shot so they have to come in at an angle, dive into the ocean.
- OTSUJI: So, what else did you learn from this person who had the sword?
- NAMBA: What? Sword.
- OTSUJI: What else did you learn from the person who had the sword? The officer that you got the sword from? What else did you learn from him? Sounds like he was more realistic about whose side...
- NAMBA: Yeah, he say, "War's wrong thing to do. Japan never declare the war to the, he say, United States. Wrong thing to do, lot of people against it, but what can I do," he say. Wartime enlisted, they'll take him out and shoot him," he say.
- OTSUJI: That was true on both sides?
- NAMBA: Both sides, yeah. United States too, you turn it down for going over frontlines, okay?

End Tape 4, Side 1

SESSION IV to be continued

SESSION IV (continued)
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
Begin Tape 4, Side 2, January 11, 1998

OTSUJI: This is Tape 4, side 2 . Okay, so we kept talking and talking and now we are over...

NAMBA: Anyway, I don't want to see another war again. I have enough of it. It's... it's real miserable.

OTSUJI: Well, I think that, you know your experience certainly brings that home, that it's not good. But let's back up. We talked a little bit too long, and I lost some of the previous information that we were talking about. We talked about interviewing General Homma, Homma.

NAMBA: Homma. General Homma.

OTSUJI: And you talked a little bit about that, although I think there's probably more to talk about, but we'll get back to that.

NAMBA: No, they want to try Homma and others, they in America all some hakujin interpreter and translator speak perfect Japanese, and those kind of guys, question first. They did that, but not too satisfied, they want a Japanese speaking hakujin officer, and they think I'm lying or something so he double, double checked, you know. I was laughing.
[interruption, phone rings]

OTSUJI: Sorry for the interruption, please continue. Please continue. Mr. Namba has difficulty hearing, and he refuses to get a hearing aid, so we will do the very best we can. So, would you like to play this one back? What were you talking about?

NAMBA: Well, we went to Shikoku island..

OTSUJI Well, we were at General Homma.

NAMBA: Oh, General Homma questioning, somebody else went to interrogate. They pulled me first, I saw first. So, because I found that out. Filipino was working

for us. Native Filipino, and then he say, "General Homma is here, he surrender, he is here." So, I say, I told him I say, "Okay, where is he?" "Well, I think he's coming over here." So I say, "Okay, I want to see him, I want to talk to him." And in the meantime, high American officer make a list, would you ask this question, you ask this question, just put down a simple yes or no, yes or no.

OTSUJI: So, would you say that the General was cooperative?

NAMBA: Cooperative, real cooperative. He's already surrender, so he, you know, he tell truth inside out because he got nothing to hide, so...

OTSUJI: So you didn't learn any military secrets?

NAMBA: He?

OTSUJI: You?

NAMBA: No.

OTSUJI: Did you get any military secrets out of him?

NAMBA: Because Japan was surrender already.

OTSUJI: They already surrendered?

NAMBA: Already surrendered, and he was escaping.

OTSUJI: Oh.

NAMBA: That Japanese general.

OTSUJI: Okay.

NAMBA: And then he was already changed all clothes. Uniform, military uniform, he didn't have nothing on. Civilian suit he had on. He looked like civilian, you know, see? If he was a soldier, he liable to get kind of get shot up or get stabbed from knife or parasol he all that. He was disarmed. He had clean clothes on.

OTSUJI: Okay, so talk to me about the sword that you have. You said that was from a junior officer.

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: So tell about that and who you got it from and where he was from?

- NAMBA: That, I forgot.
- OTSUJI: What did he say when he gave it to you?
- NAMBA: Well, he told me he say you're Japanese...
- OTSUJI: You were supposed to tell me about the sword, the family history on the sword..
- NAMBA: Right. Well, he told me he say, "I give it to you since you're Japanese, so I hope you keep this," he say. And I say, "I give it back to you. Why don't you." "No, they told me you have to turn it in, so I have to turn it in. Instead of give it to the hakujin, I want to give it to you nihonjin," he say. So, he gave it to me, so I kept it for souvenir. But, I should by right, actually I should have sent it back to sister city's Kotsu-ken. Kotsu-ken on Shikokuu. That's where he's from so maybe if he's alive still here, why maybe he happy to get it back.
- OTSUJI: Do you remember his name?
- NAMBA: No, I've forgotten, because I was foolish..
- OTSUJI: Is there something written on the sword?
- NAMBA: I pulled the handle out. Usually it's on the handle..
- OTSUJI: Something is written?
- NAMBA: But, this one here don't, maybe cheap. Engraving costs money, so he didn't have it.
- OTSUJI: So, what other interesting things did you learn from these people that you interviewed? I mean anything that was out of the usual .
- NAMBA: Well, I say I don't want to see no war again, that's my answer. That is horrible. War, I tell you, I couldn't describe in detail. Truthfully, in war people get crazy. If you're not crazy, why kill one after another, see?
- OTSUJI: Doesn't make any sense does it?
- NAMBA: I don't want to see another bloody war. That's my last comment. Actually nobody gain, you know you war they kill each other and destroy the cities and

all that. Nobody get benefit.

OTSUJI: Okay, so when you were in Japan in the Occupation, I think we talked about this earlier, so let's just....

NAMBA: Occupation what?

OTSUJI: Occupation in Japan. I think you talked to me about that before. What was it like in Okayama?

NAMBA: Well, at that time I . . . I had a... you know, kind of hit me. People look at me, they say, "Are you Japanese?" "Yeah, Japanese. My father and mother born and raised in Japan and then younger days got married and then come to--only way to get rich--go to America. A lot of poor people from Japan went to America. Rich and healthy people they stay in Japan.

OTSUJI: Okay, we're talking about the Occupation after Japan surrendered. What do you remember about...you told me before that when you went there that you were wearing your GI [Army] uniform and the kids would run up to you, others would be afraid of you, that type of thing. What do you remember in particular?

NAMBA: Well, I--only time I at that time--I felt it war is horrible and I don't want to see another war again.

OTSUJI: So, did you see Yoshino right after the war?

NAMBA: Right after the, yeah. I went to--I was worried about my sister--see, they got Okayama City all bombed by the American bombers. Just annihilated, just flat.

OTSUJI: Okay, and so what did you say to her when you saw her? What did she say to you, or what did your grandmother and grandfather say to you?

NAMBA: Well, she say, "You were an American raised in Japan, why did you enter American Army? I have to tell her I was American citizen, so I have to. The government knew I was kibei. Immigration officer know all the history already I am a kibei. So, American officer... war broke out, they interrogate me. He say, "What do you think about the war between Japan and United

States?" I say, "It is bad, I say what good does it do to kill each other?"
Soldier will kill woman, innocent woman and children and they saw it dead
both sides of the street, so I don't want to see another war again.

OTSUJI: So what did you do to help the Japanese people when you were there?

NAMBA: Well, they have all this medical aid. They got here and there, stand, people get
they hurt, people get burned and building burned and then they want to go
inside, bring all the treasure, family traditional things, don't want to get burned
out, so they take it out. And meantime house cave in, and sometimes fire.
Did not make it so burn up and die. Anyway, I saw all that, horrible sight.

OTSUJI: So was there a black market for all the things sitting out on the street?

NAMBA: Lot of black market, yeah, lot of black market going on. And that is why rich
people stay rich and poor stay poor. And I say to myself I don't want to see
no more war period.

OTSUJI: You told me about people who were in the streets begging for food.

NAMBA: Yeah, people begging. I mean, I tell you, kids, kids come by there, GI's
leftover food, they put it in the garbage can, you ought to see
about thirty, fifty kids clothes half burned, on account of all the bombing.
House start burning so try to take stuff out of the house and then house cave
in and lot of burn old people especially burn to death. So, anyway, I don't
want anybody war. I just 100% against war. Instead of killing each other, sit
down and talk it over see what was causing it, you know?

OTSUJI: So, you went to Matsuyama? What did you do in Matsuyama during the
occupation?

NAMBA: Well, I was a censor, reading the Matsuyama newspaper.

OTSUJI: Oh, so you were reading the Japanese newspaper, translating it to English.

NAMBA: Reading the Japanese newspaper. Censor.

OTSUJI: So, what kinds of things did you have to take out?

NAMBA: Oh, GI, first of all, all hard up. GI, that is a sex maniac. That is my
interpretation. Surprising, boy I tell you. They want to screw every Japanese

girl over there. I said, "You're crazy," I told them.

OTSUJI: So, what did that have to do with the newspaper?

NAMBA: Newspaper? I saved it. I saved it and Captain Smith. . . He's also an intelligence officer, high ranking officer, and he wants to see Japanese paper writing bad about American soldier before publishing it. It has to go through me and another guy. Morale is getting low because you rape young Japanese girls, soldiers all that, then rob stores, all that. Hakujin crazy about Japanese souvenirs. They keep treasures in the house. Naturally, that guy he wants to bring it back and send it back to America, see? So, Japan lost. Whatever American say, they have to obey. That was... after I saw that, after dark, young girl, you know what I mean. I mean I try not to cry but it is not a human being do something like that. You kill each other, and then he say you a good looking girl. Daughter, rape, throw it out and go another girl, all that GI dirty mind, I tell you. White man animal, I tell you, I'm not kidding. Look like human being but inside thinking, whatever they do is animal.

OTSUJI: So, did you go to the onsen [hot spring]? And did you travel around Matsuyama when you were there, on Shikoku?

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: What did you see?

NAMBA: Well, I loved the onsen. Matsuyama onsen was really relaxing. I went out with a hakujin C.I., counterintelligence corps section, hakujin. Those kind of guys, they understand Japanese, you know? They--have to--saw how many people, population increasing, and saw war with China, they taking Manchuria and China land, see? Soldiers went over there, and pull Chinese farmer. Japanese do a lot of . . . they not gentlemen either. They went over there occupy. I hear more story, Japanese in Japan they told me, see? Japanese soldier was bad, that is why they did not get help from war, so they all turn enemy. All soldier went over there, took the land, rape the daughter. See, stuff like that? So, I surprised. But this that information, I found out about, he was

a reporter in China, a Japanese guy. And so he have all that report. "All the soldiers try to kill me," he say. "They try to kill me, so I just took off as soon as the Japanese coming to check the newspaper." He throw it away.

OTSUJI: So this Chinese reporter was also censored?

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: Long time before that, shows a pattern of things.

NAMBA: So, in other words, Japanese did bad things, so, they get some back you know, see? So, Japanese soldier, you would be surprised, when it comes right down to the animal, I mean animal. Did bad things, see?

OTSUJI: Well, today we are trying to have protections for women that are long overdue.

NAMBA: Yeah, so war, is I hate to see war, war is ruin the world, I tell you.

OTSUJI: Okay, so let us go and talk about coming home.

NAMBA: Coming home? I was the happiest soldier in that group. I was, "Thank you. Thanks to kamisama, thanks to kamisama." [laughter] I do not want to see another war again, I said to myself, you know?

OTSUJI: So where did you go? After you got your discharge orders, where did you go?

NAMBA: I got discharge.

OTSUJI: Where, from Japan to directly to San Francisco to Sacramento?

NAMBA: Yeah. San Francisco, I was on a freighter, lot of old freighters were transporting, transporting all GI from Japan to United States coming back. I was on a ship, I saw the Golden Gate Bridge, I said, "namu amida butsu" [Buddhist prayer]. I was the happiest in the world. I am not kidding. All GIs were. When I saw that bridge, I did my duty, but why I see all the Japanese people suffering, dying? Why did the Japanese government do that? I was disagree 100%. They hang all the politicians, Japan, who were in Tokyo. That is the way I feel at that time. The civilians and low ranking soldiers innocent. They taking orders. If they taking orders, they kill you during wartime.

OTSUJI: So, you came back to San Francisco and then what did you do?

- NAMBA: San Francisco they come back to..
- OTSUJI: Somebody from here picked you, somebody from home went to get you, or you took the bus or the train?
- NAMBA: No, I took... they went to McClellan field [Air Force Base in Sacramento] or beyond that. That camp, what the hell the camp, I forgot. I think they keep it after war, about four years, five years, and all the GIs coming back, you have to report over there. And then you get reinstated or you want a discharge, they give you discharge paper. So, I got discharge paper. I had enough of them. I just want to get out of there fast as I can, I told them.
- OTSUJI: So, did you have a job waiting for you?
- NAMBA: Well, there's more likely waiting because I seen in the paper, "All GI's, everybody help the GI and try to find a job for them." So, I was lucky, I was working temporary, but I got civil service job, United States government job. Like a warehouse, storage keep all the Army equipment, and then some of the reusable equipment, reusable pants and shirts or uniforms.
- OTSUJI: Khaki?
- NAMBA: Yeah, khaki, they send it to laundry and make it all fresh and they segregate it by size and put it away.
- OTSUJI: So, who helped you get that first job? Who helped you get the job?
- NAMBA: First job? First job, nobody helped me. War job...
- OTSUJI: Not war job, your job after you came home?
- NAMBA: Oh, after came home?
- OTSUJI: As a civilian, now you're a civilian.
- NAMBA: Civilian, okay, that was Army Depot. Army Depot. You got new and reuse one.
- OTSUJI: But, was there somebody who helped place the returning soldiers? Was there an employment office or friend who helped you get the job?
- NAMBA: No, they have an unemployment, but soldier get priority, first priority and civilians they did not have no Army, Navy service, they get way back. First,

you serve United States Army, then discharge, you get your first job. You could choose anything you want, they got the jobs that time. So, I was, I was lucky and then.

OTSUJI: But do you remember a special person who helped you?

NAMBA: I don't remember.

OTSUJI: You know Mrs. Rigg? Do you remember a Mrs. Rigg?

NAMBA: Mrs. Rigg? Yeah, yeah..

OTSUJI: What did she do?

NAMBA: Well, she helped me, and then give a recommendation letter to go down there job you know?

OTSUJI: Do you remember where she worked? How did you know her?

NAMBA: Well I think that is, she was bringing your mom [a professionally trained seamstress] to fix the dress. That is how. . . But, that time I really thanking for lot of . . .they happy to see me.

OTSUJI: Who was happy to see you?

NAMBA: Oh, hakujin, lots of hakujin.

OTSUJI: Why? Because you were cute?

NAMBA: No. They probably at that time, they probably feel sorry for Japanese Americans. Because they know all that. U.S. government kick them out. They had own house, leasing, some of these, lot of lease and rent, kept it real nicely. Japanese people like that I remember, really...

OTSUJI: So what was your house like? Your own house? Where did you live? Did you own a house?

NAMBA: We first came back from Army? Return from Army?

OTSUJI: Yes. What did you do?

NAMBA: They were renting a house from this man here.⁷ He's owner of ... you know they take people who die, clean up and put it in a coffin.

OTSUJI: Mortuary.

⁷ Patricia and her friend had been renting the house from about June, 1944 and ran a sewing shoppe there for one and one half years.

- NAMBA: Mortuary, yeah that's the word I was looking for. Mortuary.⁸
- NAMBA: I was working so your mother was carrying you. Old small place but at least you got a place to stay. Mommy did not want country old house. Nobody went back you know. Perkins, my mother and father [and siblings]....
- OTSUJI: Your mother and father...
- NAMBA: Yeah.
- OTSUJI: Were living in Perkins?
- NAMBA: Perkins, yeah.
- OTSUJI: So, what kind of a house did they go back to?
- NAMBA: Well, it is same house Oklahoman was leasing from...
- OTSUJI: Who?
- NAMBA: His name I forgot, but anyway, he's a okie, Oklahoma, and poor people came from Oklahoma and they real poor. They do not have education, so anyway. my mother wrote me a letter, sad letter, I really cry after dark. She wants me to come back and straighten it out. You in uniform, Army, you have the power to get the ranch. . . is still on crop payment, so they did not put nothing in, no money. Then after going into camp, no income, so that they open name still my name.
- OTSUJI: In your name?
- NAMBA: Yeah. Father and mother enemy alien so you cannot buy it, but I born and raised here in America, so I could buy it see? So, anyway, I [inaudible]. Now, what happened then? Oh yeah, so I want to get it back, and they call it Artz and Cook real estate company Sacramento, still there. And they give us bad time. Say, "You did not pay any tax and the payment is due." "But I did not ask for it. The government did it and the government will help me too. All this will be squared away. If you do not want me to square it away, I am going to turn it over to government. Government could jump, jump on you. So, I give you a choice. You could fix it up for me, or you want to let it go?"

⁸ Daggett's Funeral Home, 504 - 0 Street, Sacramento, California

“Well, maybe we could do that, well, I’ll try,” he say. So, he say, “If I ask you all the questions, you going to answer it?” So I say, “Yes I do, I do my best.” So, he. . . but I told him, “I flew back from Philippines, war is still going on, but I explain all this here. For all the ranch and stuff like that . . .got. . .they took over. You guys all took over.” And I mention that, they say, “Well that was wrong, they should never do that.” So he say, “How much you got it cost?” “Well, my folks was in the camp, they do not have the money to pay so they stopped the payment, so I am overdue... “

End Tape 4, Side 2

SESSION IV to be continued

SESSION IV (continued)

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Begin Tape 5, Side 1, January 11, 1998

OTSUJI: Continuing the oral history interview with Mr. Minoru Namba, January 11, 1998. Okay, you may continue. We were at Artz and Cook [Real Estate Office] and reclaiming the Perkins property.

NAMBA: Yeah. And then, well, we had a lot of.... He did not want it to turn over. He wants to, actually, he wants to get power to control this. He wants this property back to them. I did not do it because I need, my folks, need a place to stay and they had this ground. Was nice rich ground. They could raise all the eggs and so they could raise vegetables and take to market and then bring back money for the family. So, he gave us a real bad [time]. He would not listen to me so, there was in Sacramento an attorney. His name was, I've forgotten his name. Walter Tsukamoto, yeah. He was attorney and then he was in Camp Savage when I went to school. And he was also attorney in school. So, I know him very well. So, I went [to Minnesota] to talk to him. He say, "Mr. Namba, do not worry, I will take care of that for you." "I know these Artz and Cook, they fool a lot of people and he not going to fool me," he say. "And I will take care so I tell you, you come back meet me here in Sacramento on such and such a day." And he come over from Los Ange ... , I mean, Minneapolis, Minnesota. That is where Japanese interpreter school is, intelligence school. And he flew over, come over and straighten it out, all that back payments and all that and then changed to my name. I am old enough to get it. So, he changed to my name. And, he demand to do it. They kind of hesitate to change it, but he say, "Your time is limited and my time is limited, too." So he say, "I want to square it away as quick as we can." And, so he talked to ... he is officer. Because he is a Major, he pull rank, see? So, he told Artz and Cook realty company, tell them off and then, change over. I sign it.

And, I told my folks it is going to be so much monthly payment, but anyway you could raise vegetables and then, you save money and then you pay that much every.... I wrote it down in Japanese, easy explanation. You pay that much every month. If you cannot do it, you write me letter, I'll send my check to pay it, so they will not chase you out. So, just stay there tight. Whatever they told you, well, if you do that, you let me know, I told them. I wrote to my mother, you know. And then I flew back. Oh, yeah, I flew back to bring my folks back from camp. And then that place was Oklahoman was in there. He got bunch of kids, and then I went in there. When I opened, it stink! And then, "What the hell is in the house?" I went into the bedroom. Two big goats came out. Chickens, about half dozen of them, "kaw-kaw-kaw-kaw" [laughing doing chicken sounds], he keeps in bedroom and close door. And then outside, full of big, flies. And kitchen window, all empty cans, look like mountain, all that. They eat ... open the can and then just throw can outside through the window. [Laughing]

OTSUJI: So, were they there to raise the crops, too?

NAMBA: Yeah.

OTSUJI: They were?

NAMBA: Raise, start raising from that year.

OTSUJI: No, your family did. But, did the people who were in the house?

NAMBA: Yeah. I chased the Oklahomans out.

OTSUJI: I know. But, what did they do there? Did they just live there or did they work on the ranch?

NAMBA: No, they just live there. And he is outside, see? So land was all. . . nothing but grass. And I bought old tractor for them. In those days, they crank, you know? And then "papapapa" [makes sounds like tractor starting ... laughing]

OTSUJI: Sounds like a tractor?

NAMBA: Crank, yeah, see? Old tractor, cheap, but running condition so I bought it. I left it there. So I have to ... that all did not get. I ...

- OTSUJI: Keep talking.
- NAMBA: Ah . . . all the transaction all finished and then they changed to my name. And then I went to Milwaukee to see my girlfriend which is my wife now. And then I stayed there for about a month. So, anyway, [laughs] finally we decided to get married.
- OTSUJI: So you got married up there? In Milwaukee?
- NAMBA: Huh? Milwaukee?
- OTSUJI: You got married in Milwaukee?
- NAMBA: So, that is Hashimoto daughter which is my wife, your mother. So, I stayed there about 1 month. But, I have to meet deadline. Intelligence officer in charge, and he told me to "be sure to come back." He say, "I need you." So, I have to go back once my one month is up. I hate to leave. Start leaving, she cry. I cry. "Why can't I get a discharge from here," you know?
- OTSUJI: So, where were you supposed to go back?
- NAMBA: I have to go back to the Philippines. And scheduled, they already scheduled, Japan going to be surrender. You know all American--they, of course, all the intelligence section--checking all that so Japan when they going to surrender, date and everything. They already knew ... and newspaper did not say that, see? They kept it confidential. But, I know Japan going to surrender, so we got married. I left her by herself and she crying, I crying. Why? God darn it.
- OTSUJI: That was Pat Hashimoto, Patricia Kikuno Hashimoto?
- NAMBA: And that time, I did not know birth control so that where you come in [laughs].
- OTSUJI: Thank goodness! Welcome...
- NAMBA: Yeah. So you come to this world ...
- OTSUJI: In Milwaukee?
- NAMBA: Milwaukee
- OTSUJI: I see.
- NAMBA: So, you are lucky.
- OTSUJI: So, then you went back to the Philippines?

NAMBA: I went back. They say they got written notice. Full colonel, he wrote the letter. "You must come back. Report to me at once!" he say.

OTSUJI: So you went back? How long did you stay?

NAMBA: Oh, Philippines, I stay in Philippines about two months. That time, already I know. Of course, I am working in intelligence section, so all the reports come in. Japan is going to surrender. But, I cannot talk to nobody about the secret. I mean, secret service undercover, so lot of people all start telling people like that Japan going to surrender and in the near future or two months from now, I get in a jail. So, I am scared so I don't want to tell...they tell me do not tell nobody. So I do not tell nobody. I did not even tell your mother that time. I said, she get scared so I am left behind by myself. I said, "Be patient, you go see the doctor off and on. I'll send you the money." So she was happy then. But, anyway, I got married. I found a good wife, aggressive wife for me. That is why today, I am success. I start from scratch. My mother and father did not help me. I worked eight hours a day, I work [Sacramento] Army Depot five day. And Saturday, Sunday, I work cut lawn. And, I met him this guy here in East Lawn Nursery. And, he say, "Are you... you do gardening?" I said, "I will try. I am looking for job, but anything I could... of course, I got Army Depot hire me so I got job, I am just a flunky job. But, at least I got a small check coming in every month so I could eat on, but if I get job here and, that helps. They do not worry. "I want you. I want you to take care of my garden," you see? And he was owner, he had about, around 500 acres in Sloughhouse [in eastern Sacramento County]. Every Saturday and Sunday, I go over there. I work for him.

OTSUJI: For how long?

NAMBA: Oh, until come back to our feet. After that, I bought... you remember 718 P Street? I bought that house. Before that I was renting. Renting. You just pay the rent. Nothing leave. Nothing left, right? So when you buy at least I could pay for it. And little by little and then someday that is going to be my

house. And I bought that.

OTSUJI: What year did you buy that house? Remember? Too many hard questions to ask.

NAMBA: I... you better ask your mother, because I forget. Of course, I got... if I start digging old document all that could be on a date. [January 1947]

OTSUJI: Oh, I am sure. What was the name of the owner of the Sloughhouse ranch? [Westerberg]

NAMBA: I forgot. She was a grammar school teacher and he is a boss. He owned that, I think 500 acres and then employed Japanese people was about, around, thirty-five people before the war, all year around.

OTSUJI: Work for him?

NAMBA: Yeah. He got big camping house. See? And then...I get...see? "You take care of my yard." Nice yard, you know. Big lawn in front and, all trees, shrub, nicely planted. Professional.

OTSUJI: Landscaping?

NAMBA: Yeah. So, anyway, I fixed up. So, he was real happy. And then, Army Depot people started going to war again. You know, you know after... what was it? War is over from Japan, and then United States went in, step into, China or something. Something going on in China or something. So, anyway I got that job and extra paycheck so we live in pretty good. At least, you know, grocery money, I will take care of that, just with Saturday and Sunday. So, I work seven day a week. I work hard, you know.

OTSUJI: Where else did you work? What other jobs did you have? Did you work in a bowling alley?

NAMBA: Oh, yeah...bowling alley. I met this guy here, Mexican guy. I met him at the Army Depot, you know? And, hey, this is one job not enough I am not making so I want to look for another job, just part time job. "Hey [whispering], don't tell nobody," he say. "I got a bowling alley job, pick up pins." See? He say, "I can't do it myself so busy, I need you. So, I am going

to talk to boss. And if it is okay," he say, "You and I go work for him." So, he said okay so I worked picking up ...those days. Today, they got automatic, you know, pick up. Those days, bend it down, pick up all the pins [laughs]. Shit. And then...

OTSUJI: Did you line them up again?

NAMBA: Line them up? Yeah, yeah. See? I did it for...I think, two years or something. That helped, you know, spending money. And then, Army Depot, I get paycheck every month, so that goes in house payment and food, you know. So, that was real nice of him. So Mexican, Paul Ortega, he nice guy. He, ex-Navy man during the war. So...

OTSUJI: Which other jobs did you have? Where else did you work?

NAMBA: I...after that...oh, I was working Army Depot, but my boss, he's got a side income coming. He is. . . a supervisor job. But...

OTSUJI: So what did your supervisor do?

NAMBA: Well, he is a supervisor, he say, "Namba, You want more job?" "Yeah, if it's a...as long as it does not interrupt this work here, which is Army Depot I am talking to. And, Army Depot, I want five days so I want to stay." "But, this is Saturday and Sunday, and after work", he say. "Oh, yeah, yeah" he say. "I have this concession. I own it and I am doing it with just my wife." He did not have kids. He lives on Folsom Boulevard. And he says, "Hey, you could help me. I could get all this Coke machine and that way you could get more money," he says. "And I will get money, too."

OTSUJI: You are talking Coke as in Coca Cola?

NAMBA: Coca Cola.

OTSUJI: Soda machine?

NAMBA: Soda machine. See, I work. So, he was. . . treat me real good, you know, he say...

OTSUJI: What did you do with those soda machines?

NAMBA: Soda machine. You take the empty bottles out and then fill up machine. See?

They--you know, how coke machine--got full of coke, full ones in there, take it out and stick it in there, you know. And then, wipe up soda machine, collect coins, and first two months, I think, two or three months, he helped me, to show me how to do it. And then when you got trouble, most of the trouble right here so you better watch this, this and that. And, so I was doing it all by myself. That was big, big help, big check, you know, almost I get it from Army...working Army Depot.

OTSUJI: So, how many hours...?

NAMBA: So he helped me after...

OTSUJI: So, you got the money out of the machine and you got to keep that?

NAMBA: No, I give it back to him.

OTSUJI: Oh, but he paid you a salary.

NAMBA: He paid so much, you know for the week. Week's pay. . . so about two...almost one...allowance, you know, spending money run out. I could use that every week he pay me. See? That was real big help. And he help me about three or four years in Army Depot. I was working under him. He was my immediate supervisor. See? So he really treat me...

OTSUJI: What was his name?

NAMBA: Ah, Harry Luck. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Luck, L-u-c-k? Luck. "Good Luck" that's his name. And then he's got red hair not red, red; just red, between brown and red, kind of. Nice guy. First...

OTSUJI: So how many...

NAMBA: First, Japanese boss. Not Japanese, hakujin boss. And then, I was work for him and I think he made good money, too, Coke dispenser. But, anyway, he recommend for my supervisor on his floor. Lot of hakujin was working, old timer was in there but, he get madder than hell, you know. He..."suck ass, son of a bitch," he tells me. So, he say, "What the hell? What do you care," he say. "You just jealous," I say. "If you want it, why don't you go up there, I give you my job so you could take it! [laughs]. A white man said, "No,

no I don't want it," but he was jealous. He was a braggart, but he, I mentioned to Harry and he says, "Don't pay attention. Don't even think about it. The heck with it," he says. [laughing] "Okay, I thought I let you know," I told him. I say "When I am in trouble you have to help me, so..." "Oh, yeah, naturally I'll give you 100%," he say. But, Harry was...he liked Japanese and he know what "Japanese people went through," he say, "All the Japanese people, innocent people, put into camp. That was wrong," he say. And then, he say, "You fighting with German, but German people did not go to camp," he say. So he was real nice hakujin.

OTSUJI: So after you had all those jobs...well, how long did you work six days a week? Seven days a week?

NAMBA: Seven days a week I work.

OTSUJI: For how long?

NAMBA: Oh, I don't know. I...better ask your mother. At least, I think, five, six, ten years, I think. And then after that, I get, meantime, Army give me...because of inflation, pay raise, you know. So, I was making and...he recommend me, I am floor manager. Because I go a little bit early, turn on all the lights and all the conveyor lines and all the machines going. I turn them motors on and warm them up, you know? And then, any light bulbs burn out and some electric motors burn out, you know. All day running, you know, so burn out, won't start, I have to call in repair shop foreman. He come over and fix it and all that. So, Harry Luck was happy, too, you know, somebody help him, see?

OTSUJI: So, at any of this time, did you think about going back to school?

NAMBA: School?

OTSUJI: Taking English. Taking arithmetic?

NAMBA: It's already too late now. I got my one foot in coffin.

OTSUJI: Not now. Then. When you were working at the Army Depot. Didn't they send you to school? Didn't the Army Depot send you to school?

- NAMBA: Yeah. They wanted to send me to packing, packaging school. That's when I was working in Shipping Branch, see. In shipping, supervisor, you have to pack, you know, glass anything that breaks you have to use special packing, see. So anyway, I learn lot of things. But, Harry was a nice, nice guy. All hakujin did not help me like that, you know.
- OTSUJI: So how many years did you work at the Army Depot?
- NAMBA: Army Depot, I work twenty two years so...
- OTSUJI: That's all?
- NAMBA: Yeah.
- OTSUJI: I thought you had forty years in the government service.
- NAMBA: Forty years. My Army time count, see? So, Army, I had six years. I spend, then rest of time in Army Depot. Army supervision, you know, that Army Depot all the...
- OTSUJI: You must have worked there thirty-two years.
- NAMBA: Yeah, thirty-two years.
- OTSUJI: Thirty-two, that makes more sense. okay.
- NAMBA: So, I get good pay, pension, you know.
- OTSUJI: Okay, so do you want to tell me more about your wife, Pat Hashimoto, Patricia Kikuno Hashimoto since we are almost at the end of Tape 5, side 1? Since we're almost at the end of the tape, would you like to say something about her. Tell me about her?
- NAMBA: Well, I think I married to nice wife, nice lady. She raise three children for me and she packed lunch every day for how many years, see. She was sewing so, that really helped. Stay home with... take care of the children and at the same time she sew. When kids went to sleep, why she sew it and help with little spending money. That was big help. So, I think to myself I don't want to brag, but I think I success for my "no brain" fool. [laughing]. But, I think I did pretty good. Don't you think?
- OTSUJI: Oh not bad, not bad.

- NAMBA: Putting up big rental unit that big help, too, you know. I already paid for how many years old ago? About four or five years ago?
- OTSUJI: So, you have a comfortable retirement, is that what you are saying?
- NAMBA: Yeah.
- OTSUJI: That's good.
- NAMBA: Well, I am satisfied.
- OTSUJI: Well, so then tell me about your children?
- NAMBA: My children did, why, you guys did a good job and good job for I am real happy. I think Richard, he is good. He was real proud. He is a teacher in college. You know, I was real proud about that. And, of course, he got another job, but that is okay. He is always. . . doing okay. He got...his child real nice...smart girl. I am real proud of that. And I am proud of your two sons. Your two sons doing pretty good. I think Patrick is okay, but Reid need motivate, motivation, encourage him. So, he need mother's boy... see, the kids they mind mothers more than father. So, you encourage him.
- OTSUJI: Reid is going to transfer to the University.
- NAMBA: What?
- OTSUJI: Reid is going to transfer to school this fall.
- NAMBA: Where?
- OTSUJI: San Diego State, Monterey, or UC San Diego. So now he has a plan. To do computers. Jennifer is going into the sciences, math. Patrick is going into environmental studies.
- NAMBA: That is good. Anyway, educate. See, me, my time...education...lot of education is secondary. As long as you got a head ... common sense, you work. But, today you want to get easy job. You do not want to get hard labor. If you want an easy job, you have to have brain. Lot of competition, but, you know, when you have brain you get success. You get, sooner or later, you get more money than ordinary people. So, you should encourage Patrick. I think Patrick making okay as long as you get about two years university education,

he gets good pay. Yeah. So up in this world you got to have education to get ahead. But, I was real, pretty lucky to hold that supervisor job for how many years. Shipping Branch assignment. Harry Luck, I am thanking for Harry Luck, yeah. He feel sorry for me. All the Japanese evacuation. He against it. "Why citizens," he say, "throw in camp like that?" He say, "that's wrong." He say, so he feel sorry for me and he's the one who recommend me for floor supervisor.

OTSUJI: Okay, I think that's almost to the end of this tape so why don't we call it a day?

NAMBA: Okay.

OTSUJI: You did very well today. We talked for many hours.

NAMBA: Okay

OTSUJI: So we will continue again next time.

NAMBA: Sometimes you have to make it up. I did not finish sometime completely on that.

OTSUJI: Well, that is right.

NAMBA: Jump one to another, you know, so we have to.... But, you keep this to yourself, do not leave, put this out on the public.

OTSUJI: Well, we are going to try to finish this for the Time of Remembrance Program and you have the option of not putting it out for as many years as you want to. We will consider your wishes. Thank you.

End Tape 5, Side 1

END SESSION IV

SESSION V,
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, Sutter General Hospital
Begin Tape 5, Side 2 December 29, 1998

[Minoru Namba was admitted to Sutter General Hospital on December 27, 1998 with acute myelogenous leukemia. He was still interested in our oral history project, but was unable to complete the interview because of the diagnostic tests and medications. He said he "had a good life, was proud of his family, and was ready to die." He refused treatment and left the hospital on his own on December 30. He passed away peacefully at home on January 1, 1999, surrounded by his beloved wife and devoted children and grandchildren. This is the final interview.]

OTSUJI: This is Eileen Namba Otsuji, daughter of Minoru Namba, and we are continuing to tape a segment that I believe we missed in our previous taping. This is a portion of my father's life when he worked in the cannery as a young man in Washington state and Astoria, Oregon.
Good morning, how are you?

NAMBA: Oh, I'm [going] home.

OTSUJI: We have to finish up our oral history, and I wanted to ask you a few questions. Can you tell me about the time that you spent in the cannery in Astoria? How old were you when you went there?

NAMBA: I went when I was about high school. I did not go to high school. Just finished grammar school. I jumped the school. [chuckles]

OTSUJI: You went to elementary school in Perkins, so that you could learn English because you had already graduated high school in Japan. Right? Okay. So, then you came back to Sacramento, you worked on the farm and then your Uncle Kumago said to come to Washington to work in the cannery. So, what was it like working in the cannery?

NAMBA: [sighing] I'm sorry, I don't know.

- OTSUJI: I'm going to move your bed up.
[Interruption, sound of motor on bed]
- OTSUJI: Okay, now you can talk better.
- NAMBA: Oyster company.
- OTSUJI: Do you remember those days?
- NAMBA: Yeah. Just about 1935. First was a little New Washington Oyster Company.⁹
- OTSUJI: New Washington Oyster Company?
[Interruption]
- OTSUJI: I think you talked about that. You said you had about four different partners?
Do you remember their names?
- NAMBA: Yeah. Shigeru went to Japan. Went back to Japan. He's a kibei. He graduated high school here. Graduated high school Japan. Well educated man. There was an Ono.
- OTSUJI: Ono? O-n-o? What was his first name?
- NAMBA: He was a kind of ... I don't know how to... He's a tall Japanese...
- OTSUJI: He was a kibei?
- NAMBA: Kibei.
- OTSUJI: So, that is why he went back to Japan.
- NAMBA: Yeah, Ono. And then [inaudible] he is in intelligence section.
- OTSUJI: That is a nice picture. What is he doing in the picture?
- NAMBA: His name is Ono.
- OTSUJI: Well, it looks like a beautiful cannery.
- NAMBA: He is a CRPA. You know what CRPA stand for?
- OTSUJI: No, what does CRPA stand for?
- NAMBA: Columbia Packer Association
- OTSUJI: Oh, Columbia River Packer Association.

NAMBA: That is a big fish company. They have two steamboats going from... crew

⁹ Information about New Washington Oyster Company and the oyster industry obtained from Patricia Namba's notes of her conversation with Minoru Namba; other sources include "Oyster wars ended in friendship. Early rivals kept industry alive" by Gordy Holt, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, February 8, 2000; and Doug Allen, Chinook Observer, September, 2003.

from Astoria, Oregon. Pick up.... Pick up all this employees and inside the ship they packed. Cannery. The boat stand for Columbia River Packer Association.

OTSUJI: So, who owned that?

NAMBA: Corporation. Hakujin.

OTSUJI: Oh, so that was your first job.

NAMBA: Yeah. My first job.

OTSUJI: You got some experience there. And then where did you work?

NAMBA: Later I worked over there. I did work Astoria, Oregon.

OTSUJI: Oh, Columbia River Packer Association is Astoria.

NAMBA: Astoria, yeah. After they took over. [inaudible] They want us to try this. Japanese, they had a contract [inaudible] company. These people.

OTSUJI: They recruited Chinese and Japanese and it was owned by Caucasians.

NAMBA: Finnish people.

OTSUJI: Finnish? Oh, from Finland.

NAMBA: Finland, yeah. Anyway, they contract the Columbia River Packer Association went to the salmon cannery.

OTSUJI: It was all salmon. Did they do tuna? Did they also can tuna?

NAMBA: Oh, yeah. They offer canning factory.

[interruption by sound of alarm whistle]

OTSUJI: Oh.

[No further sound on the tape.]

End Tape 5, Side 2

END SESSION V

MINORU NAMBA MILITARY TIMELINE¹²

U.S. Army Tour of Duty (1941-1945) Basic Training, U.S. Prisoner of War, and Military Intelligence Service (Asiatic Pacific Theater)

- March 26, 1941 Date of entry into active service; drafted from Perkins, California, into U.S. Army, 24 years old. Induction ceremony at South Side Park in downtown Sacramento.³ Army serial number #39 078 624
- Assigned to Camp Roberts for 3 months of basic training. Paid \$21 per month.
- July 1941 Transferred to San Luis Obispo, U.S. Army, *40th Infantry Division, Company C*. Supply Clerk, Assistant Machine Gunner. Only Japanese American in Company C.
- August 1941 Capt. Smith returned from a Regimental Conference. "War is coming...Japan has never lost a war." He ordered the Triangle Maneuver, intensive training, in Fort Lewis, Washington; southern California's 40th Division; and Fort Ord, Monterey, California. "Very, very muddy. You could say it was very good training. It rained and rained in Chehalis, Washington."
- December 7, 1941 ". . . Doing k.p., my head on radio--7:00 a.m.-- I heard, Japan attacks Pearl Harbor!"
- At 9:00 a.m. Capt Smith said to go to the ammunition dump and get the ammunition. Only few in Company. . . we went to ammunition dump and loaded 50 caliber machine guns on trucks. At 3:00 p.m. I was sent to Fort McArthur Army barracks, then to Terminal Island and Long Beach for guard duty.
- "They were a vital island penninsula. There were lots of Japanese American fisherman there. The Japanese Americans were given three hours to prepare to evacuate from their homes. Some went to the Buddhist temples. The weekend troop were not back from

¹ Sources include: 1) Oral history notes recorded by Patricia Namba; 2) MIS Reunion booklets, 1991 and 1992; 3) Mike Minoru Namba's personal reference library; 4) National Japanese American Historical Society Oral History Timeline, 5) World Book Encyclopedia, 1987, 6) Reid Otsuji's Jan Ken Po Gakko oral history report; 7) Minoru's handwritten notes.

² Compiled and edited by Eileen Namba Otsuji, 2002.

³ Minoru Namba - Life in the Army.

their weekend yet.”⁴

“Captain Smith ordered ‘Japanese American soldiers will evacuate to isolated places.’ We were transferred to Inglewood Park which was the 40th Division Headquarters. “...ordered to turn in rifle and bayonet. I was prisoner of war, 24 hours guarded. Nothing but dirty work for 3 months.

Date unknown

Confined to Camp Inglewood Park [40th Division Headquarters], bivouac area. 24 hour guards.”

Colonel Kai Rasmussen in command.

“Every day we made a formation of a segregated group of fifty Japanese American soldiers and marched four blocks to the mess hall. Caucasian men, women and children yelled “Yellow belly Japs” and then threw rocks and sand in our faces. The guards were instructed not to break formation. A white woman spit right in my face. I was mad as hell, but I could not retaliate.”

“Nisei soldiers were used to unload food, railroad ties and digging ditches. I was lucky. For about 3 months I was sent to the warehouse to issue new clothing to the new recruits who were other Nisei soldiers.

February 19, 1942⁵

Executive Order 9066 signed by President Roosevelt. “Nisei soldiers were prisoners of war” and their families were being removed from the West Coast under martial law.

“I have brand new Mercury, Model 1939. Lose or sell! Left [car] home. All Nisei soldiers restricted. My parents sold car for a nominal price.”⁶

March 1942

“I was interviewed by Col. Rasmussen, who spoke Japanese, regarding loyalty and personal history. I was sent to Fort Bliss, Texas, with all other Japanese American soldiers (approx. 175-225 men) from Fort Ord, San Luis Obispo and Fort Lewis.

“One month later, about half were sent to Fort Sam Houston,

⁴ February 25, 1942, Japanese American residents of Terminal Island, Los Angeles were given 55 hours to leave.

⁵ President Gerald Ford rescinds Executive Order 9066 in 1976.

⁶ By June 5, 1942 all persons of Japanese ancestry were in temporary detention camps called Assembly Centers. The Namba family went to the Pinedale Assembly Center on May 24, 1942. The man who bought the car said he knew they could not take it to camp with them and if they left it, he would steal it anyway.

Company C; and half remained in Fort Bliss.⁷ Company D was a segregated group of African American soldiers only.

"We were put into stockade for fighting with a hostile white soldier over mistreatment, discrimination and harassment. Report of incident sent to War Dept. and about 2 months later, 15 Nisei soldiers were ordered by War Department to Camp Savage, Minnesota, for six month intensive study course at the Military Intelligence Language School [MIS]⁸.

"Twenty to thirty soldiers⁹ were in special class two or three hours per day to learn English until they were sent to Camp Savage. Fifteen people were chosen. Sargent Goda was in charge. VIP treatment on Pullman car [train], dining car and we were served by porters. I was in that group of fifteen on their way to Camp Savage."

May-November 1942

MIS training. Camp Savage and Fort Snelling.

Camp Savage in Minneapolis, "was an "old man's home" and they did not want to move out. "Dirty, spider webs, needed paint, no beds--slept on floor--2 Army blankets issued. Army cot delivered after 3 days. Mess Hall--walked outside, 200 feet. Shower room, 100 feet. Beginning to get cold. Winter time, below zero 22 degrees. Hair icy and nose drip turned into icicles returning to barracks from shower.

"Schooling every day was very intensive. 6 a.m. reveille, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m in school. Saturdays were all day tests. 70% passing."

As a kibeï, the course was very difficult "because I was handicapped in English" having been educated in Japan. . When it was curfew, I went to the toilet--only place where there was still light--and studied. I also taught a conversation class to the Caucasians."

November 30, 1942

Graduation from MIS Language School, Fort Snelling, Minnesota, 10 a.m.

⁷ Minoru stayed at Fort Bliss.

⁸ Studied methods of interrogation, reading and writing characters, Japanese psychology, history and geography of Japan.

⁹ Japanese was their primary language because they were born in America and educated in Japan; kibeï.

Ten nisei/kibei soldiers¹⁰ were assigned to overseas duty, Asiatic Pacific Theater, GHQ, "destination unknown." Captain Pan, from Hawaii was in charge.

April 18, 1943

Destination: Asiatic Pacific Theater. "Boarded TWA¹¹ from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Commanding Officer, Captain Penn, and Harry Umeda, team leader. Refueled in Salt Lake City, Utah. Landed in Hamilton Air Force Base, San Rafael, California,

Continued trip from Hamilton AFB to Hickam Air Field, Honolulu, Hawaii on B-24, 10 hrs flight. Had 10 hour pass; visited Teruyo Hayashi¹² and husband (radio repairman at Hickman Field); refueled at Johnston Island, a Coral rock island with 1 coconut tree. "Snow white--issued sun glasses because it is so bright". Continued to Canton Island, Wallis Island, Suva Island in the Fiji Islands, New Caledonia, and Brisbane.

"The plane was a 2 propeller bomber, no insulation. They gave us two sleeping blankets. We were at an altitude of 10,000 feet so we were very cold."

April 22, 1943

Arrived in Asiatic Pacific Theater.
40th Division Infantry Headquarters.

Reassigned to *6th Army Headquarters*. Went out on task force. 1st offensive.

June-July 1943

Served with 1st Marine Corp division, Woodlark Island.¹³ Task Force. "Marine Corp construction crew made runway for Air Force planes. Was strafed every 30 minutes by Japanese fighter planes. They flew just above the coconut trees so radar was unable to pick it up."

August 1943

New Guinea Campaign starts. Milne Bay
6th Army. Dead Japanese bodies on beach. Temporary assignment to *Marine and Construction Batalion Regiment*. LST

¹⁰ Among the ten were "Richard Hirata, Harry Umeda, Nishida, Shinbo from Seattle, and a farmer from Walnut Grove." Other kibei mentioned as Army buddies were Jack Tsuchida, Hiroshi Tanabe, Jimmy Tsumura and his brother, George Tsumura, Masaru Yoshioka, but where they served was not recorded.

¹¹ Trans World Airline, commercial civilian airplane, converted for military transport.

¹² future wife, Patricia Kikuno Hashimoto's cousin.

¹³ Landing on Woodlark Island, June 30, 1943

Task Force.¹⁴ Special mission.

August 7, 1943 "Guadacanal and Solomon Island --heavy fighting." U.S. Forces invade Guadalcanal. Start Solomon Island Campaign.¹⁵

Goodenough Island with *Marine Corp.*¹⁶ Beachhead was another island. New Britton Island, Rabaul was "big battle."

December 4, 1943 Buna, New Guinea

"While I was at New Guinea, received bunch of documents from Tillamook, Oregon, [New Washington] Oyster Company. Building burned down, tax deferred bankruptcy document. Total loss. I signed front of [witnessed by] advocate [military lawyer] and sent back."^{17 1819}

March 1944 "Reassigned to *1st Cavalry Division. 6th Army.* Admiralty Island landing, 4:00 a.m. (by LST) first invasion met tough Japanese Army and Marines, B-29 bomber. Stepping stone for Japan and Guam. Interpreted on Negros²⁰ and Manus Islands.²¹ Strategy called "Island Hopping."²²

1st Calvary Division, Texas Calvary, horse division. In New Caledonia, dismount and mechanized division. Turn in horses and got Jeeps.

July 1944 Returned to Hollandia and reassigned to the *24th Division Infantry* (Hawaiian Division) with Richard Hirata. 300 convoy went to

¹⁴ Landing Ship Tank carrying troops inside.

¹⁵ July 5, U.S. Forces invade New Georgia Island (Solomon Island Campaign)

¹⁶ Most likely, 1st Marine Division

¹⁷ Received redress payment of \$20,000 to compensate for loss of legally held property.

¹⁸ July 1980 President Jimmy Carter creates Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC). August 10, 1988 The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 is signed by President Ronald Reagan. Payments started in October 1990 and continued through 1993.

¹⁹ "I was one of the four partners owning the company. While I was in the service, the other partners, Tanaka, Watanabe, and Yokoyama were evacuated from the West Coast. Before the forced evacuation, they leased the cannery to a caucasian [sic] person. He did not pay the current taxes, the building was burned, and something about bankruptcy. Being so far removed from the scene and engaged at the battle scene, I did not know the particulars. I signed all the documents in front of Col. White, Chief of Intelligence Section.

²⁰ Admiralty Islands, significant battle Feb 29-March 9, 1944.

²¹ Big island north of New Guinea

²² Joe Harrington 1977 MIS interview progress notes: "Feb 29, 1944, 1st Cav lands Negros; Mar 2, Captured documents, Negros, indicate planned attack next night. Ambush set up. Enemy slaughtered."

Leyte, Phillipines.²³ 4:00 a.m.

Beachhead 1 month

Mindanao 1 month

“Yamato²⁴ came into bay and was sunk. Saw it burning.”

Japanese soldiers had no supply or ammunition. Supply line was cut off, no resistance.

Watanabe, Hajime²⁵ name on K.I.A. [killed in action] list. His transport ship got sunk in bay.

“American forces were retreating back 20 miles because Japanese fleet was coming. They did not fire 1 single cannon.

“I was riding in jeep. Richard [Hirata] was walking.” The opinion at the time was, “if Japan loses at Leyte, it was the end for Japan. Ready to surrender.”²⁶ Sending message to Geneva.”

August 1944

Hollandia, New Guinea

September 1944

Back to New Guinea, reassigned to the *24th Division* in the Philippines

1st Calvary Division invaded the Admiralty Island. 1 month battle.

October 20, 1944

U.S. Forces invade Leyte. Start of the liberation of the Phillipines.

Leyte, Philippines. *24th Infantry Division*. “first invasion [campaign], 3:30 a.m. Cloudy, windy, pitch [black] dark. High waves, severe fighting. City close to Leyte Strait, fighting finished. Marine Corps went from island to island. Luzon Island,

²³ Mike Namba notes: Battle of Leyte Gulf had 3 separate fleet actions: a) Battle of Cape Engamo, b) Samur, c) Battle of Surigao Strait where the battleships Yamashiro and Fuso were attacked by U.S. battleships and cruisers. Minoru reported in the oral interview that he saw “blood red pillars of fire” which were most likely the remnants of the exploding ships.

²⁵ Watanabe, Hajime. Minoru’s cousin, son of his maternal uncle, Sueo Watanabe, of Okayama, Japan. As a child, Minoru was raised in Okayama by his maternal grandparents, Sekiyo and Fusa Watanabe, and Sueo’s family.

²⁶ The Japanese Imperial Navy was destroyed at the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

Mindanao Island, Leyte ...²⁷

"Leyte was decisive battle. No oil to fly Zeros [Japanese military airplane]. . . was losing [war] so prisoners were stabbed and beheaded."

Mindanao Island. "Mop up operation. Main Japanese forces destroyed."

"Re-assembly center. Japanese civilians [immigrants] , 10,000 owned sisal factory."²⁸ Japanese [soldiers] stragglers came in [looking like they were] skin and bones."

"Going back, while in Mindanao Bay we saw a canoe with four people. They came in and wanted to surrender. All of them were wearing civilian clothes which were all dirty and torn. They were put into a stockade and that is where I interviewed them. A Filipino told me he was General Homma²⁹ . I asked their names and one of them identified himself as General Homma, Homma Taisho, translated as commanding General. He was real friendly and nice guy."

The native islanders "had Japanese heads, six to twelve on a stick," for headquarters. "Loops over ear."

"Talk of Japan's surrender. Japan fighter planes on land, but not in air. Out of fuel."

December 1944

Bataan³⁰

March 1945

Returned to Mindanao Island and Mindoro Island

²⁷"We got into the Bay of Leyte with 300 ships in the convoy. It was pitch dark, 4:00 a.m. when we landed. It was stormy and the waves were ten feet to fifteen feet high. We had to climb down out of the boat hanging onto the net. The sea was choppy so the landing barge was rocked back and forth and some G.I. had their legs caught between the troop ship and the barge. There was no way anyone could help anyone. Soon as we got on shore, the enemy opened up with their machine gun and mortar shells. Some were injured -- many were killed. It was the first time I had seen so many dead soldiers lying on the ground. Japanese convoy came into Leyte strait. We had to withdraw about ten miles. A Japanese Navy officer swam to shore and was captured by the Americans. His ship had been hit by a torpedo and sunk. He said this was the final battle." -Minoru Namba; recorded by Patricia Namba

²⁸ also estimated 20,000 Japanese immigrants.

²⁹ General of the Imperial Japanese 14th Army; 47 years old. Career history: World War I, military attache to the Japanese Embassy, London, England, 1918; Chief of the Army Press Bureau, India, 1922.

³⁰ Mentioned in interview without any further comment.

April 13, 1945 Departed for U.S.A. to take care of urgent family matter.³¹ "Only enlisted man" on plane.

 "Flew back to U.S. after receiving letter from mother [Hanae Namba] to 'straighten out affair regarding Perkins home and property.'"

April 14, 1945 Arrived in U.S.A. Departed for Poston, Arizona, Relocation Camp II³², to see his parents, Senzo and Hanae Namba.

 "...went to Idaho to see Uncle [Kumago Watanabe] to borrow money to take care of farm property [Perkins, CA]. Saw Uncle in [WRA] Minidoka Camp and borrowed \$1000. Then went to Minnesota to see Walter Tsukamoto³³ for help. We met in Sacramento, settled affairs and got the deed.

April 30, 1945 Still on R & R. Returned to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and married nisei, Kikuno "Patricia" Hashimoto³⁴, hometown sweetheart.

 Returned with new wife to help Namba family³⁵ move back to their Perkins, California, family home following release from Poston's WRA Camp II.

July 14, 1945 Ordered back and departed for Asiatic Pacific Theater. A day later arrived somewhere in the Philippines, New Guinea, or one of the South Sea Islands.^{36,37}

September 1945 Returned to *24th Division*.

³¹ January 2, 1945 West Coast Exclusion order against Japanese Americans revoked. September 4, Western Defense Command revokes all West Coast exclusion orders against Japanese Americans. Those returning to the West Coast were sometimes greeted with hostility and violence.

³² Colorado River Relocation Center (Poston and Parker)

³³ Nisei attorney, MIS Language School instructor. His oral history and papers are available at the Japanese American National Museum and California State University, Sacramento, Library, Special Collections and Archives.

³⁴ Patricia, with her issei parents and brothers were sent to the Pinedale Assembly Center (1942); to the WRA Camp in Poston, Arizona; and finally, with government authorization, to Milwaukee to assist a German lady who requested household help for holiday entertaining.

³⁵ Father Senzo (WRA #25276B), mother Hanae (25276C) and unmarried siblings: sister Yuriko (25276E); brothers Haruo (25276A), Saburo (25276D), Shiro (25276F). Sisters Kimiko Namba and Mitsue Hashimoto, their husbands and children had separate WRA family numbers.

³⁶ August 6, 1945 First atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima

August 8, 1945 Second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki.

August 15, 1945 V.J. Day

August 28, 1945 Advance occupation Forces land at Atsugi Airport, Japan.

³⁷ July 5, 1945 General MacArthur announces liberation of the Philippines

"Developed yellow jaundice in Mindanao. Went to sickbay on Navy cruiser ship. Top deck. VIP [very important person] treatment. Food good. doctor checked three times a day and gave pills.

Pilot [captain] was sure Japan was ready to surrender.³⁸ 24th Division and cruiser reached Japan same time. All troop and convoy ships together. Beautiful sight. Navy nurse from sick bay made arrangement for jeep to take [me] to 24th Division, Matsuyama. Captain Marshall greeted me.

November 27, 1945

24th Division name changed to the U.S. Occupation Force.

178 Language Detachment, APO 24
Masaru Yoshioka #39002728
Minoru Namba #39078625
Richard Hirata #39079935

"American Occupation force stationed in burned out Matsuyama.³⁹ Only remaining building was Dogo Onsen [historic hot spring resort]. Slept in the former City Hall cement floor. As interpreter, [I] went with the Captain, read Ehime newspaper to censor to U.S. Army ... no bad reports allowed. Went to Police Department, Shikaido City Office, interpreted for injured Japanese people to get Army medical aid. Worked 7 a.m. to 10 or 11 p.m. every night; went to sleep 12 a.m. Visited Dogo Onsen, Matsuyama's historic hot spring."

All misbehavior of G.I.s censored. Only good [press] reported. Capt. Marshall asked me to stay. Declined Sr. Warrant Officer job, "no responsibility with pay."

In Matsuyama, the children were barefoot, no food, and going through garbage cans. No house. Cover with newspapers to sleep at night. I got old blankets and chocolate candy from supply sergeant and gave to children every day. G.I.s stayed at City Hall which was half burned. No roof, slept on concrete floor. A week later, supply came and so put up tent. Put up offices. Japanese carpenters helped build office.

³⁸ September 2, 1945 Formal surrender by Japan on USS Missouri

³⁹ After Japan's surrender and while in Matsuyama, Shikoku Island, Minoru visited his American born sister, Yoshino Watanabe, his grandparents and their families in Okayama.

December 5, 1945	Departed for U.S.A. from Japan on a freight ship.
December 27, 1945	Passed under the Golden Gate Bridge and disembarked in San Francisco, California
December 30, 1945	Date of separation from active service at Separation Center, Camp Beale, California. ⁴⁰
January 1, 1999	Minoru Namba passes away peacefully at home.
April 2000	The highest military honor, the <i>Military Intelligence Service Presidential Unit Citation</i> ⁴¹ was awarded by President of the United States of America ⁴² to the veterans of the U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service, 1942-1945.

⁴⁰ Served as Intelligence non-commissioned officer for 25 months. Length of military service was 4 years, 9 months, 5 days.

⁴¹ Joe Harrington, retired Navy chief journalist and author of *Yankee Samurai*, said the story of the nisei linguists was "kept a secret by the Pentagon for nearly 30 years." Many niseis were told by their superiors never to mention their war experiences in the Pacific and "even to this day, some are reluctant to be interviewed for my book." He said the niseis translated the entire Japanese battle plans for the naval battle of the Philippines. These plans were captured from the commander-in-chief of the Combined Japanese Fleets when the plane--he was hurrying to join his fleet--made a forced landing in the Philippines. *Honolulu Star Bulletin* 12/8/77

⁴² Individual blue ribbon unit citation application submitted posthumously by family. January 2003.

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NAME	IDENTIFICATION	SOURCE OF VERIFICATION	PAGE INTRODUCED
Minoru Namba ¹ aka Mr. Namba aka Mike Namba aka Min Namba 11/15/1916- 1/1/1999	Interviewee; a kibei, American born, [Manlove, Sacramento County, California (CA)]; moved to Takamatsu, Oichison-cho, Okayama, Japan; attended Jinjokoto Shogakko in Okayama; returned to Washington Elementary School, Perkins CA; worked as farmer, cannery worker, partner and owner of New Washington Oyster Company; U.S. Army soldier, Military Intelligence Service, veteran of WWII, served in the South Pacific and Phillipines; worked at Sacramento Signal Depot; married Patricia Hashimoto; three children: Eileen, Richard and Mike. Final resting place: East Lawn Cemetery, Sacramento.	Eileen Otsuji	1
Eileen Namba Otsuji aka Eileen Otsuji aka Eileen Miyoko nee Namba 1/12/1946-	Interviewer; eldest child of Minoru and Patricia Namba; only daughter; attended University of California (UC) Davis and Berkeley; graduated UC San Francisco, 1969; hospital and community pharmacist; UCSF assistant clinical professor; University of the Pacific adjunct clinical professor; active in professional and community organizations; resides in Sacramento, CA; 1970 married Ronald Toshiro Otsuji of Sacramento, [graduated UC Berkeley, BS Agricultural Economics, 1969; U.S. Army veteran, 1966-68; fifth degree black belt in karate]; two sons: Patrick Toratoshi (Sacramento) and Reid Tadashi (San Diego, CA).	Patricia Namba	1
Patricia Kikuno Namba nee Hashimoto aka Kikuno Namba 10/22/1920-	A nisei; seamstress, farmer's daughter; homemaker, business woman (custom dressmaking and	Eileen Otsuji	1

¹ aka Minoru Nanba on California State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Standard Certificate of Birth, dated 11/25/1916; father Senzo's passport also recorded last name as "Nanba."

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	landlord), Sacramento County Hospital & UC Medical Center emergency room admissions supervisor; born in Oak Park, Sacramento County, CA; graduated from Hazemore Sewing School, San Francisco, CA; 1942 forcibly relocated to Pinedale Assembly Center, Pinedale, CA; WRA Poston, AZ, Poston Camp II, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin; nisei brothers Masateru Henry, Yasuo Harry, Katsumi Frank, and Jitsuo Bob; issei parents Torazuchi Hashimoto, immigrated from Iwakuni, Yamaguchi-ken, and Shige (nee Yanagawa) Hashimoto, from Yanai, Yamaguchi-ken] Japan. Married in 1945 to Minoru Namba in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; 3 children born in Sacramento. Name and birthdates: Eileen Miyoko Namba 1/12/1946; Richard Kazuo Namba 8/2/1948; Mike Minoru Namba 10/25/1956.		
Hanae Namba nee Watanabe 1893-1992	Minoru's mother Born in Mite, Okayama, Japan; third child, first daughter of Seikyo and Fusa Watanabe, came to America 1914 to marry Senzo Namba in <u>baishakunin</u> arranged marriage; picture bride; homemaker, farmer; mother of kibeis Kimiko [Kay] and Minoru [Min] and niseis Mitsue [Eleanor], Haruo [Jim], Saburo [Roy], Shiro [John] Yuriko [Yuri]; and birth mother of Yoshino Watanabe of Okayama, Japan. WWII: WRA #25276C Pinedale Assembly Center, Poston Camp II, Poston, AZ. Final restng place: East Lawn Cemetery, Sacramento.	Eileen Otsuji	2

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NAME	IDENTIFICATION	SOURCE OF VERIFICATION	PAGE INTRODUCED
Senzo Namba 1882-9/6/73	Minoru's father; second youngest child (brothers Nisaburo, Sakujiro, and Chuemon); immigrated to California in 1906; 18 years old, served in Japanese Army artillery unit during Japan-Russia war; worked on the trans- continental railroad; ² settled in Perkins, CA; married Hanae Watanabe; "arranged marriage," <u>baishakunin</u> [go-between] was the brother of the prime minister, Mr. Inukai; sired 8 children; farmer; WWII: WRA #25276B Pinedale Assembly II, Poston, AZ. Final resting place: East Lawn Cemetery, Sacramento.	Minoru Namba	2
Mitsue aka Eleanor Hashimoto aka Auntie Mitsi nee Namba	Minoru's sister; Married to Patricia's brother, Masateru Hashimoto; Nisei, born and raised in America; third child, 2nd daughter of Senzo and Hanae Namba WWII: Poston Camp II, AZ.	Eileen Otsuji	4
Auntie Kay aka Kimiko Namba aka Kimichan nee Namba (1915-)	Minoru's older sister a kibe, raised in Japan; daughter and oldest child of Senzo and Hanae Namba; married to cousin Tetsuo [Ted] Namba, nisei, son of Nisaburo Namba; home in Santa Rosa, California; mother of Bob Namba [married to Patricia, children David, Kim, Robert; Felton, CA]; and May Namba [married to Conard "Connie" Blevins, Lake Havasu, AZ, daughter, Rebecca, graduated Stanford University].	Eileen Otsuji	4

² He said he was so mistreated he escaped one night and ran all the way to California under cover of darkness at night, over the Rocky Mountains and the Sierras, trying not to get caught.

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NAME	IDENTIFICATION	SOURCE OF VERIFICATION	PAGE INTRODUCED
Mr. Inukai	Youngest brother of Prime Minister Inukai ³ ; <u>baishakunin</u> (go-between or matchmaker) for Senzo Namba and Hanae Watanabe	Minoru Namba	5
Yoshino [Watanabe] ⁴ nee Namba	Minoru's younger sister; lives in Okayama, Japan; daughter of Senzo and Hanae Namba; born in America, returned to Japan as a child for education; adopted by Noboru-ojisan and Miki-obasan; heir to Watanabe estate and art collection; a teacher; married Masashi Tuboi ⁵ ; mother of 3 daughters: Takako [widow of Mr. Ozaki, mother of 1 daughter] lives in Okayama; Kazuko [12/11/1946, married to Kazuhide Hagihara of Kurashiki, mother of 1 son and 3 daughters; Midori Watanabe [1/21/51 married to Minoru Moriya ⁶ , mother of 2 sons and 1 daughter.	Minoru Namba	5
Yoshiko [Naito] nee Watanabe aka <u>obasan</u> 1904-	Youngest (fifth) child of Seikyo and Fusa Watanabe nee Osumi; Minoru's maternal aunt born approx 1906; took care of Minoru Yoshino, and Kimiko; Hanae's sister; ikebana and o-cha (tea) ceremony expert; sewing teacher Lives in Japan; married	Minoru Namba	6

³ In 1931, Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai led civilian government. Japanese Army officers assumed power. Inukai was assassinated in 1932. World Book Encyclopedia 1987

⁴ Yoshino's Grandchildren and great-grandchildren: Grandsons Soichi Hagihara 9/9/72, Kurashiki; Toru Watanabe, 9/30/78, Tokyo; Manabu Watanabe, 1/15/89, Tokyo. Granddaughters Noriko Ozaki, 8/19/70, husband Yoshihiro, 11/7/62, baby Yusuke, 8/31/1996, Okayama; Izumi Hagihara, 7/2/74, husband Kazuya, 7/4/73, daughter Chiaki, 12/31/02, Kurashiki; Mitsuko Hagihara, 5/30/77, Kurashiki; Yoshiko Hagihara, 11/5/78, Kurashiki; Akane Watanabe, 9/13/78, Tokyo.

⁵ yoshi for Watanabe family; aka Masashi Tuboi elementary school principal; mayor.

⁶ yoshi for Watanabe family, aka Minoru Watanabe, 9-11-48, Tokyo.

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	to Mr.Naito; lives in Takamatsu, near Okayama; only child, a daughter, died in childhood. 100 years old (2003) and resides in nursing home in Okayama.		
Sueo [Watanabe] aka <u>ojisan</u>	Youngest son, fourth child, of Seikyo and Fusa Watanabe's five children; brother of Hanae; Minoru and Yoshino came to live with him, Yoshiko [his youngest sister], and parents in main house; master of ikebana and o-chanoyu, artist, woodcarver; government official; became Mayor; wife, Hideko, 1 child, a son, Satoshi. Satoshi and wife, Misao, and son, Akira currently reside in a beautiful modern house in the Watanabe compound.	Minoru Namba	7
Noboru [Watanabe] aka <u>ojisan</u>	Second son, second child of Sekiyo and Fusa Watanabe; Minoru's maternal Uncle; brother of Hanae; graduated from Kyoto, Ryukoku Daigaku, to become Buddhist priest; artist; married to Miki-obasan who lived 96 years. Noboru died at age 52 due to bicycle accident. He fell into a ditch, died of internal injuries. His only child, a son, died of pneumonia before the American children came; Kimiko [Kay] moved in with his now childless widow and lived with her until she was called back to America by her parents to take care of her 5 younger siblings and work on the farm. Noboru's landscapes and watercolors are exquisite. Miki-obasan adopted Noboru's niece, the kibe child, Yoshino Namba.	Minoru Namba	7
Miki-obasan			

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Kumago [Watanabe] aka <u>ojisan</u> 1/1/1887-2/3/1965	Eldest son, 1st child, of Seikyo and Fusa Watanabe. Expected to become Buddhist priest like father, but emigrated to America to start a business as a fisherman and oysterman. At the time, Japan's military was dominating the government. Young men were being conscripted into the Japanese Army to fight in Manchuria and it was time to leave Japan. After getting settled in the Northwest,	Minoru Namba Patricia Namba	8
Isamu Watanabe nee Hikasa ⁷ 1891-12/15/1972	he married Isamu Hikasa, daughter of a government official, from Okayama. They worked in the canneries in Oregon and Washington, at the mouth of the Columbia River. They were owners and partners in the New Washington Oyster Company ⁸ . Isamu, practical business woman, also owned and operated a laundry business and was skilled in laundering, cleaning, dyeing, and processing apparel. Executive Order 9066 forced them into the WRA Minidoka Concentration Camp resulting in loss of their oyster company. In 1945, "too old to start over"; Kumago and Isamu decided to join Minoru and his family and resettle in Sacramento after leaving Minidoka. Being now homeless, they first lived at the Sacramento Buddhist Church temporary hostel; then moved to 718 P Street (Minoru's house). They finally purchased a home at 4713 Mead Ave. ⁹		28

⁷ Isamu's stepsister's, Mrs. Hikasa's daughter, Takako Nishi of Okayama, married a pharmacist.

⁸ Oyster farming was a chief industry in the Inland Sea region where Okayama was located. World Book Encyclopedia 1987.

⁹ Upon the widow Isamu's death, a neighbor purchased the home, but a job change forced a sale. Minoru's daughter purchased the home and it remains in the family.

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	<p>Kumago worked as janitor at the Catholic Grace Day Home; Isamu worked at the Libby's cannery. Childless, they wanted to adopt grand-niece, Eileen, but Minoru refused based on his own traumatic experience. Kumago was a gracious, kind, surrogate father and grandfather to Minoru and his family as was Isamu respectively. Their final resting place: Koya-san Buddhist temple cemetery [on Mt Koya near Osaka, Japan], where the remains of the Seven Samurai and other people of historical interest are buried.</p>		
Shinpukuji	Name of Watanabe family's Buddhist temple served by priests, Seikyo and Noboru Watanabe in the mid-1800s to the early 1900s; located next to their family compound, in Mite, Okayama, Japan.	Yoshino Watanabe	10
Oklahoma	State where Okies came from to settle in the Central Valley of California.	Minoru Namba	13
Okie	Slang word for former residents of Oklahoma; resettled in the Central Valley of California to escape from poverty and harsh climate; leased Namba family home and ranch in Perkins, CA; moved out when the Namba family was released from camp and returned home. 1942-1945.	Minoru Namba	13
Poston [Arizona]	Desolate location of War Relocation Authority (WRA) WWII concentration camp; on the banks of the Colorado River. Namba and Hashimoto families	Patricia Namba	13

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	were moved there under armed military guard in 1942 taking only what they could carry.		
Masateru Hashimoto aka Mas aka Henry	Brother of Minoru's wife Patricia Kikuno; husband of Minoru's sister, Mitsue; drafted at the same time into the Army, 1941; sent to WRA Poston Camp II, with wife and 2 young children, Dennis Teruo and Carolyn Yoshie.	Patricia Namba	13
Richard [Namba] 1948-	Minoru's second child, first son; sansei; did gardening jobs on Saturdays and rental unit maintenance with father [Namba Landscaping; graduated California State University, Humboldt, Bachelor of Science, Forestry; California State University, San Francisco, Masters of Science, Recreation and Leisure Management; professor California State University, San Diego; Water Management specialist, County of San Diego, CA. Married to Susan Linn Hara, [sansei, Doctor of Pharmacy, UC San Francisco 1972; daughter of Dr. Shigeo Hara. ^{10]}] father of Jennifer Mariko Namba.	Eileen Otsuji	13
Mike Minoru Namba 1956-	Sansei; third child, second son of Minoru and Patricia Namba; worked with father doing gardening jobs every Saturday and rental unit maintenance, [Namba Landscaping]. graduated University of California, Davis, Bachelor of Science,	Patricia Namba	13

¹⁰ Shigeru Hara, 1911- ; nisei, born in Sacramento, California; Tule Lake WRA camp physician, volunteered and served during WWII in the U.S. Army medical Corp in Europe; after WWII permanently relocated to San Diego; graduated UC Berkeley and Marquette University, Wisconsin, Medical School. His brother, Harry Hara, was a dentist in WRA camp.

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	Biochemistry, 1978; University of the Pacific (UOP), Master of Science, Pharmacology, 1980; UCLA PhD Candidate; Doctor of Pharmacy, 1985, UOP; Assistant Professor, School of Pharmacy, UOP; State of California, Department of Health Sevices, Healthcare Policy division; Sr. Pharmaceutical Consultant; community volunteer.		
Stefani, Mr and Mrs	Italian family; neighbors of Namba Family in Perkins, CA; lived on or near 14th Ave.	Minoru Namba	14
Victor Stefani	Mr. and Mrs. Stefani's son. approx. 4 years younger than Minoru. Drafted in 1942. Very nice family.	Minoru Namba	15
Nisaburo [Namba]	Senzo Namba's oldest brother; immigrated to Santa Rosa, CA, as a young man; father of niseis Tetsuo [Ted], Mary, and Ruth, and eldest daughter, Oju-san who was adopted, and raised in Japan by Nobutomo Namba.	Minoru Namba Kimiko Namba	20
Mary [Fujita] nee Namba	Minoru's first cousin, a nisei; 3nd daughter of Nisaburo Namba; married to "Buddy" Fujita of San Carlos, CA; children Leonard and Sharon.	Minoru Namba	20
Ruth [Hiraga] nee Namba	Minoru's first cousin; nisei; sister to Mary Fujita, Ted Namba and Oju-san of Japan; 2nd daughter of Nisaburo Namba; married Ted Hiraga, lives in Santa Rosa, CA. She dopted and raised her sister Oju-san's grandson, the son of daughter, Sumie and her husband, a pharmacist. The child, Jerry Hiraga, now works	Minoru Namba	20

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	as a pharmacist in Fairfield, CA.		
Sakujiro [Namba]	Senzo Namba's youngest brother; raised in Hanajiri; stayed in Japan	Minoru Namba	20
Hanajiri	Village in Niwase-cho, in Okayama-ken, Japan; home to Senzo Namba's parents and siblings.	Minoru Namba	21
Niwase-cho ¹¹	City located in Okayama-ken.	Minoru Namba	21
Okayama-ken	Okayama-ken = prefecture ¹² ; analogous to a state in Japan [or California in the United States]. Watanabe and Namba families place of origin		21
Land Park	A community of Sacramento California; used to compare Hanajiri as an American community within the city.	Minoru Namba	21
<u>Ojiisan</u>	Japanese word for Grandfather	Minoru Namba	22
Watanabe homes aka estate aka compound aka villa aka farm	1) Home of Seikyo and Fusa Watanabe; birthplace of their children Kumago, Noburo, Hanae, Sueo, and Yoshiko Watanabe; childhood home of American-born grandchildren Minoru, Kimiko, and Yoshino Namba. Built in mid-1800s. Current residence of Yoshino Watanabe and husband [yoshi] Masashi Tuboi Watanabe ¹³ ; Yoshino's daughter, Midori and husband [yoshi] Minoru Watanabe ¹⁴ , now living	Minoru Namba	22

¹¹ cho is Japanese word for city.

¹² Prefecture are the largest units of local government in Japan.

¹³ Masashi took the Watanabe last name because the family did not have male heirs. He was the second son in his family; his older brother continued their family name

¹⁴ Yoshii. Yoshino and Masashi Watanabe had three daughters; no sons to carry on the family name; Minoru Moriya agreed to use Watanabe as his married name; Midori and Minoru's sons Toru and Manabu will carry on the Watanabe name.

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	in Tokyo, will return at the appropriate time to live in and take care of the ancestral home, temple and grounds. Line of succession remains intact.		
	2) Takako Ozaki ¹⁵ nee Watanabe, Yoshino's eldest daughter and her late husband built a modern home in the compound. Takako's only child, daughter, Noriko, and her husband and child, moved into the Ozaki house. Takako moved in into the main house to help care for her her elderly parents.		
	3) Modern home built by Sueo; son Satoshi, wife Misao and their son Akira now live there.		
<u>hakujin</u>	Japanese word for Caucasian [white] person	Minoru Namba	23
Joe Serna	Mayor of Sacramento, 1990s; Democrat; American of Mexican ancestry; professor of government, CSUS.	Eileen Otsuji	25
Watanabe, Seikyo ¹⁶ approx 1860-before 1945 aka <u>ojiisan</u>	Minoru's maternal grandfather; Buddhist priest; home in Mite, Okayama, Japan, husband of Fusa Watanabe; father of sons Kumago, Noboru, and Sueo and daughters Hanae and Yoshiko; guardian of 3 American grandchildren, Kimiko, Minoru, Yoshino; took Miinoru on his home visits; "grandfather was riding on back of my bicycle and we both fell in a ditch laughing."	Minoru Namba	25

¹⁵ Takako's husband, Mr. Ozaki, was a descendant of a well known family.

¹⁶ In Japanese nomenclature and conversation, last name is followed by first name, e.g. Watanabe Seikyo.

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Watanabe, Fusa nee Fusa Osumi aka <u>Obaasan</u> approx. 1860-1950	Minoru's beloved maternal grandmother, wife of priest; managed the home, family and rice fields described as "hardworking wise, thoughtful, kind, strict disciplinarian, ambitious, loving;" raised her own 5 children and 3 American grandchildren.	Minoru Namba	25
Nishi Honganji	In Kyoto, Japan; main temple for the Buddhist sect founded by Shinran Shonin	Minoru Namba	26
<u>mon</u>	family crest	Minoru Namba	26
Lake Tahoe	South Lake Tahoe, CA; family vacation resort; pristine alpine lake; largest in North America.	Eileen Otsuji	29
<u>Shinya no obasan</u> <u>Shinya</u> =new house <u>obasan</u> =aunt	translated as the "aunt living in the new house" referring to Noboru's widow, Miki-obasan. Kimiko lived with her mother's sister-in-law as a child in Okayama.	Minoru Namba	36
MacArthur	General Douglas MacArthur, USA; Commander, Allied Forces WWII and Occupation of Japan.		40
Manchuria	In China; occupation by Japanese military; puppet state of Manchukuo set up to curb expansion of Russian, British and American influence.	Minoru Namba	41
Manchurian Incident	One of many conflicts provoked by the Japanese military to dominate the targeted areas and to destabilize the civilian Japanese government under Prime Minister Inukai.	Minoru Namba	41

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Perkins ¹⁷	Community in Sacramento County, California. location of Namba family home and ranch.	Minoru Namba	47
Washington School	Elementary [grammar] School in Perkins, CA; was not segregated like three other Sacramento County Schools prior to WWII [Florin Grammar School, Courtland Grammar School and 1 other].	Minoru Namba Eileen Otsuji	47
Oki, George	Son of Issei parents who founded Oki Nursery in Perkins, Sacramento County, CA. Helped father re-establish business after release from WRA Poston Camp II, in Arizona, 1946.	Minoru Namba	47
Oki Nursery	Original location was near the Namba farm in Perkins. Founded by Mr. and Mrs. M. Oki, both issei; well known to Japanese Americans in the area because they hired isseis, particularly non-English speaking women, who were able to earn credits towards Social Security eligibility. George and Richard Oki, nisei sons, developed a multi-site, nationwide operation. In the 1990s, after decades of growth and prosperity, an economic recession forced bankruptcy and closure of this three generation business.	Minoru Namba Eileen Otsuji George Oki	47
Matsuda's Nursery	Japanese American family owned business still in operation; located at the original site of the Oki Nursery on Jackson Road;	Minoru Namba	47

¹⁷ Perkins was served by the Manlove Station Post Office; interviewee used both names to to refer to birthplace and family home; family used a P.O. Box address.

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	in Perkins, CA; near the Namba family farm.		
Davis	Davis family owned large grape farm; children attended Washington Grammar School with Roy Namba.	Minoru Namba	48
Uncle Roy [Namba] aka Saburo Namba 1925	Younger brother of Minoru Namba, only nisei sibling to graduate collge; born in Perkins, CA.; WRA #252760, went with parents to Poston II Camp, AZ; eventually drafted into U.S. Army, assigned to Greenland; mechanical engineer; married to Arlyne [nee Abe whose father was a Buddhist lay leader, Salinas, CA, Buddhist Church; her sister married a Buddhist priest]; father of 4 children: Curtis [attorney, Sacramento, wife Valerie Fong, two daughters]; Lori Oto nee Namba [social services, Sacramento; a son and two daughters]; Tina Quon nee Namba [pharmacist, Sacramento, husband Dennis, also a pharmacist; two daughters]; and Teri Bamsbach nee Namba [anesthesiologist, Simi Valley, CA; husband Steve cardiologist, Simi Valley, CA, two daughters].	Minoru Namba	48
Uncle Sam	Nick name referring to the United States government.		48
U.S. Army	United States Army		48
Ms. Walkers	One was Principal of Washington Grammar School and the other was a teacher; marital status unknown.	Minoru Namba	49
MIS M.I.S.	Military Intelligence Service branch of the	Minoru Namba	50

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	U.S. Army; Minoru's tour of duty 1941-1945.		
Marine Corps	Branch of the U.S. Armed Services; Minoru, although drafted to the U.S. Army, was assigned to the Marine Corps to do MIS work in the South Pacific.	Minoru Namba	50
Colonel White	Minoru's commanding officer; Chief G-2 intelligence section; protected kibe soldier from being mistaken for the enemy; served in the South Pacific Theater.	Minoru Namba	52
New Guinea	Second largest island in the world; located in the South Pacific Ocean; north of Australia; Allied forces occupied during World War II.	1987 <u>World Book</u> <u>Encyclopedia</u>	53
Nojiri Company	Real estate company; Mr. Nojiri, older nisei and American citizen, was officer in company; managed the vegetable and fruit cooperative for the local Issei farmers. Bought property for them using his name since they were prohibited by the California Alien Land Laws, enacted in 1913 and 1920, to own land.	Minoru Namba	53
Murakami	Nisei whose name was used by the Nojiri Company to hold title to the Namba property in Perkins, CA. First name unknown.	Minoru Namba	54
Minneapolis	Largest city in Minnesota; lies on the west bank of the Mississippi River; climate	<u>World Book</u> <u>Encyclopedia</u> . 1987	55

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	-10 degrees in winter;		
Camp Savage	U.S. Army site of the Military Intelligence School; in Minnesota; originally a Veterans rest home.	Minoru Namba	55
Monterey Language Institute	First established at the Presidio of San Francisco; presently located in Monterey.	Minoru Namba	55
Captain Smith	U.S. Army; Company Commander, 40th Infantry Division, Company C; San Luis Obispo, CA, 1941.	Minoru Namba	56
Pearl Harbor [Hawaii]	Pearl Harbor Naval Base; December 7, 1941, Japan bombs U.S. Pacific Fleet ships;	Minoru Namba	57
Tadao Hayashi and Sam	Names mentioned as friends or fellow draftee; acquaintances from Perkins Japanese Language School.	Minoru Namba	59
Camp Roberts, California	Site of U.S. Army basic trainng. March-June 1941.	Minoru Namba	59
Roosevelt, [Franklin]	32nd President of the United States, 1933-1945. Declares war on Japan, Dec 8, 1941. Issues Executive Order 9066 forcibly removing all Japanese Americans from the West Coast.	Eileen Otsuji	62
United States Army 40th Division Infantry	Located at San Luis Obispo Basic training, supply clerk and assistant machine gunner training, 1941.	Minoru Namba	63
MacArthur, [Douglas] 1880-1964	American General in World War II; from 1935-1941 had served as military adviser to the Philippine Commonwealth; In July 1941, he became commander of the Army forces	<u>World Book</u> <u>Encyclopedia</u> , 1987	64

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	in the far east; led the defense of the Philippines and received the Medal of Honor; became the commander of the Allied forces in the Southwest Pacific; his troops fought in northeast New Guinea, western New Britain, and the Admiralty Islands; isolated the Japanese base at Rabaul, the chief port of New Britain. Also captured western New Guinea and Morotai; Philippine island of Leyte, Mindoro in the Central Philippines, Luzon, southern Philippines and Borneo. Became 5-star General; presided over surrender ceremony on <i>U.S.S. Missouri</i> on September 2, 1945, Served as Allied Supreme commander of the occupation of Japan after WWII, 1945-1951.		
442nd and 100th	442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Infantry Division; World War II segregated Army, Japanese American nisei soldiers only; became the most decorated units in the history of the Army; recipients of the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation Award.		65
Washington	Washington, D.C.; national capital of the United States of America; home of the three branches of government, Executive, Congress and the Supreme Court; military headquarters in the Pentagon.	Eileen Otsuji	65
Naito	Last name of Yoshiko Naito nee Watanabe. Yoshiko's late husband who died in Manchuria while serving in the Japanese Army; a young man probably conscripted into the military.	Minoru Namba	68
24th Division	Fought in New Guinea; South Pacific theater under command of General	Minoru Namba	68

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	MacArthur; included MIS soldiers.		
Tojo, [Hideki] 1884-1948	Japanese General and Premier who led Japan into war in 1941; a militarist who opposed democratic developments within Japan; provoked "incidents;" 1931, engineered the Manchurian Incident which started the events leading to the Pacific War; named to high political office after the assassination of civilian leaders in Japan; 1940 became Minister of War; 1941 named Premier, resigned in 1944 after American victories in 1943-44; convicted and executed as war criminal after Japan's surrender.	<u>World Book Encyclopedia</u> 1987	70
POW	Prisoner of War	Minoru Namba	72
Malaria	A parasitic disease common in tropical and subtropical areas; transmitted by the <i>Anopheles</i> mosquito; jaundice, fever, chills, pain, nausea, weakness, anemia, headache.		77
<u>NichiBei [Times]</u>	Bilingual Japanese American daily newspaper; former editor Noboru Shirai oral history available at CSUS Library]; headquarters in San Francisco, CA.	Minoru Namba	77
Tule Lake	Site of WRA Camp; later became a segregated camp housing pro-Japan internees; those who answered "no-no" on the so-called loyalty questionnaire.	Minoru Namba	81
Brisbane, Australia	Locations of military duty ¹⁸		86

¹⁸ for more detail refer to map

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Philippines	'		86
Guadacanal	'		86
New Britain	'		86
Rock Island	'		86
Woodlark Island	'		88
Goodenough Island	'		88
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation, Unites States of America		81
Unites States Air Force	A branch of the military		100
General Homma, [Masaharu] (1887-1946)	General of the Imperial Japanese 14th Army; 54 years old; [1941] led invasion of the Philippines; captured by U.S.; executed by firing squad, Los Banos, Luzon Island, April 1946. In 1952 he was cleared by the Japanese government and his name was removed from the list of war criminals. ¹⁹ Career history: World War I, military attache to the Japanese Embassy, London, England, 1918; Chief of the Army Press Bureau, India, 1922.	Mike Namba	104
gangrene	Necrosis of tissue due to obstruction of blood supply; often called gas gangrene when infected. "jungle rot"	Medical Dictionary	106
1st Calvary, 24th Division	Invaded the Admiralty Islands in the Philippines; after surrender became the U.S. Occupation Force	Minoru Namba	110
Shikoku Island	Smallest of Japan's four main islands.	Minoru Namba	110
Matsuyama	Capital city of Shikoku Island; site of historic Dogo Onsen [hot springs];	Minoru Namba	110

¹⁹ Certain of his staff officers issued orders in his name to execute POWs and countermanded his lenient policies. Against the advice of his staff, he ordered the release of Filippino soldiers who were captured after the invasion and he refused to allow ill treatment of Filippinos.

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	U.S. Occupation forces 24th division assigned to reconstruct the city and assist the families.		
Japanese Zero	Japanese military airplane used in WWII.	Minoru Namba	112
Kotsu-ken	Home of the Japanese POW; junior officer; after surrendering, he gave his sword to Minoru; prefecture on Shikoku Island.	Minoru Namba	116
San Francisco	California; Port of entry to the U.S.	Minoru Namba	120
Namu Amida Butsu (Buddhist)	Various interpretations; verbal expression of thanksgiving and gratitude for salvation assured; of deep gratitude for the compassionate heart of Amida; embodiment purity, truth, goodness, beauty, wisdom and peace. ²⁰	Rev. Kenryu Tsuji	120
McClellan Field	American Air Force Base; locaed in eastern Sacramento County, CA. Name confused with Beale Air Force Base [Camp Beale] north of Sacramento.	Minoru Namba	120
Army Depot	First Japanese American to obtain federal employment in civilian job after WWII; formerly known as Sacramento Signal Depot and Sacramento Army Depot; military installation; with civilian employees; procurement, maintenance, repair, shipping branches.	Minoru Namba	121
Mrs. Rigg	A customer of Patricia Namba's custom dressmaking	Patricia Namba	121

²⁰ *JodoShinshu: A Brief Introduction* by Rev Kenryu Tsuji, 1954, Buddhist Churches of America.

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	business; worked at CA State Department of Employment; referred Minoru for job at Signal Depot [renamed Sacramento Army Depot and moved from the old Bercut Richards cannery location to the Fruitridge Road location]. He was the first Japanese American hired in March 1946, many others followed.		
Daggett Mortuary	Owner was Morris Daggett who rented house to Patricia Namba and friends for a dressmaking shop at 504 O Street, Sacramento. 1945. Birthplace of Eileen Namba.	Patricia Namba	122
Artz & Cook	Real estate company, Sacramento, CA; 1945 tried to take advantage of the Namba family and other Japanese Americans who were at risk for losing their homes and property while they were imprisoned in the War Relocation Authority concentration camps and unable to keep up annual tax payments.	Minoru Namba	123
Walter Tsukamoto ²¹	Nisei, attorney; graduate of UC Berkeley law school; National JACL leader (1930s); U.S. Army, M.I.S. Language School Instructor, Camp Savage; Colonel, U.S. Army; powerful advocate who helped Minoru recover the title and deed to the Namba family property from Artz and Cook Real Estate (1945).	Minoru Namba Eileen Otsuji	124
East Lawn Nursery	Nursery operated by	Patricia Namba	127

²¹oral history and papers available at CSUS Library Japanese American Archival Collection and the Japanese American National Museum.

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(Mr. Westerberg)	<p>East Lawn Cemetery²² in Sacramento, CA; Location where Minoru met Mr. Westerberg who owned a large farm, home and gardens in Sloughouse.</p> <p>Minoru worked for him as a gardener tending his grounds every Saturday and Sunday for 30 years.</p>		
718 P Street	<p>1946, first home purchased by Minoru and Patricia Namba²³; birthplace of sons Richard and Mike; 2 story home above an unfinished 1st floor basement, with 12 foot high, curved ceilings with trim and moldings, toilet with elevated tank and pull chain; custom design; 2nd floor entry and porch²⁴, parlor, family room, and kitchen; a long stairway to the top floor bedrooms and bathroom; children spent many joyous, occassionally painful, moments sliding down the mahogany bannister; presumably the ground level basement was not finished due to the risk of the Sacramento River overflowing its banks, and lack of money. Min, Pat and 3 children lived on the 2nd floor with the sewing room in the living room; upstairs bedrooms were set up dormitory style</p>	<p>Patricia Namba Eileen Otsuji</p>	127

²² East Lawn is resting place for deceased Namba and Hashimoto family members, including the ashes of Minoru Namba.

²³ Purchased from a "Chinese man." Prior to WWII the Mayeda family [including Pearl Zarilla nee Mayeda, Patricia's Sacramento High School classmate] owned it, but had to move out when they were forced into camp.

²⁴ On hot summer nights, we would sit on the porch rocking and rolling with the gospel music coming from the church across the street. The Chinese owned grocery store was across the street on the northeast corner; and the Japanese owned grocery store was to to the west at the end of the block; and the caucasian owned funeral home was to the east at the end of the block; and Goodwill Industries was our backyard neighbor across the alley on Q Street.

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	and rented to five Japanese American women who came to the city to work. Kumago and Isamu Watanabe lived in the home after the Buddhist Church of Sacramento closed its hostel for returning internees. By 1958, ²⁵ Minoru and family moved to South Land Park into a much smaller, newly built tract home. ²⁶		
Paul Ortega	Co-worker at the Sacramento Army Depot; Mexican-American; ex-Navy; recruited Minoru for a part-time job in bowling alley setting up the pins to earn extra money; "nice guy."	Minoru Namba	129
Coca Cola	World famous flavored beverage; known as Coke because the original formulation was compounded by a pharmacist and contained cocaine; today it has caffeine.	Eileen Otsuji	129
Harry Luck	First caucasian boss; nice guy with reddish/brown hair; understood the injustice of the internment; supervisor for 4 or 5 years at the Sacramento Army Depot; had a vending machine business; no children; taught Minoru how to clean the Coca Cola dispensers and collect the money;	Minoru Namba	130

²⁵ In 2000, Mike Namba, PharmD, MS, started working for the CA Dept of Health Services, presently located on the same site where he was born; Patricia thinks this is deja vu.

²⁶ By 1958, the State of California exercised the right of eminent domain to force the sale of the homes and businesses in the entire block to acquire the land and demolish the structures for redevelopment. Purchase price, \$12,000, could not replace a site and a house of comparable design, size and value; the replacement--a new suburban ranch style tract house--cost \$17,000; and was smaller, basic, and lacking in architectural detail. Twice, the government forced Minoru and Patricia from their homes.

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	Second and third jobs for both men.		
Jennifer Mariko Namba 1977-	Yonsei, daughter of Richard and Susan Hara Namba; granddaughter of Minoru and Patricia Namba; high school valedictorian; UC Irvine, 1999, summa cum laude, Bachelor of Science, Biology; Phi Beta Kappa; UCSF, Class President, tutor, free clinic director, Doctor of Pharmacy, 2004; church and community leader; pianist.	Eileen Otsuji	133
Patrick Toratoshi Otsuji 1972-	Yonsei; son of Ronald and Eileen Namba Otsuji; grandson of Minoru and Patricia Namba, helped Grandfather with rental maintenance [Namba Landscaping]; clerked in Japanese food store, local bank, and community Center; sports enthusiast; studied piano; UC Davis, Bachelor of Science, Environmental Sciences, 1998; Environmental Specialist, Division of Water Quality, Water Resources Control Board, State of California, Environmental Protection Agency; father of Alisabeth Mariko Otsuji, 7-27-2002, and a son due April 2004; [wife Monica Torres, DePaul University, Chicago, Bachelor of Arts, English, 1998].	Eileen Otsuji	133
Reid Tadashi Otsuji 1975-	Yonsei, son of Ronald and Eileen Namba Otsuji; grandson of Minoru and Patricia Namba, helped Grandfather with rental maintenance [Namba Landscaping]; co-founder <i>ON Music 2 Motion</i> ; studied piano; graduated Sacramento City College, Associate of Arts degree Language & Literature [honors]; and UC San Diego Warren College, Bachelor of Arts, Visual Arts in the Media with	Eileen Otsuji	133

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	an emphasis in Computing, honors, 2000; work experience in market research, video game development; high school computer skills instructor; San Diego Marriott Hotel and Convention Centers audio visual, information systems, telecommunications, and business center technician; 2003 UC San Diego Geisel Library, Art and Architecture Library Digital Image Reserves manager.		
Time of Remembrance	Annual civic education program sponsored by Florin JACL to teach the story of the Japanese American experience in World War II; to study the cause and effect of "racism, war hysteria, and faillure of political leadership"; to review the principles of liberty, freedom, democracy, and an understanding of the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the United States of America.	Eileen Otsuji	134
Astoria, Oregon	Historic city at the mouth of the Columbia River; oyster, fishing and canning industries. Location of the Columbia River Packers Association.		135
New Washington Oyster Company	Founded in the early 1900s; Pre-WWII partners included Kumago & Isamu Watanabe, Minoru Namba and others; located Tillamook, and South Bend, Oregon.		135